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# HELEN HARLOW'S VOW.

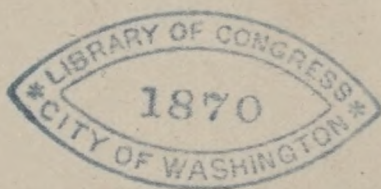
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BY

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To  
WOMAN EVERYWHERE,  
AND TO  
WRONGED AND OUTCAST WOMAN ESPECIALLY,  
IS  
*THIS BOOK LOVINGLY DEDICATED*  
BY  
THE AUTHORESS.

---

“ As I gazed, and as I listened, there came a pale, blue-footed maiden ;  
Eyes filled with lurid light ;  
Her body bent with sickness, her lone heart heavy laden ;  
Her home had been the roofless street,  
Her day had been the night :  
First wept the angel sadly, — then smiled the angel gladly,  
And caught the maiden madly rushing from the open door ;  
And I heard a chorus swelling,  
Grand beyond a mortal's telling,  
‘ Enter sister, thou art pure, thou art sinless evermore.’ ”







## TO THE READER.

---

**K**IND READER,—Again I present my claims to your attention. Perhaps you will be surprised at my boldness, from the fact that so few have dared to speak fearlessly for woman. In dedicating this book to woman in general, and to the outcast in particular, I am prompted by a love of justice, as well as by the desire to arouse woman to that self-assertion, that self-justice, which will insure justice from others. My observation of life, of persons and things in general, has shown me, that, so long as any class of persons will submit to injustice, just so long they must be subject thereto.

That “God helps those who help themselves” is the truest of axioms; that is, if one axiom, or truth, can be truer than another: for it is only through ourselves, through the life-forces within ourselves, that we can be helped. Therefore, the man or woman who stimulates another to earn a dollar has really done more for them than though they had given them five; for that ability, once developed, will bear fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some many hundred fold. The same law holds good of every other channel through which the souls of men and women



act upon this external plane of life, — is as true of moral as of physical power.

If, then, in writing this book, I can make woman feel that she need not submit to the injustice which society metes out to her, in condemning her so much more severely than it does man for the same offense, — if I can make her feel this, I have done more for her than though I had given thousands of dollars toward erecting homes for fallen women.

My honest opinion is, that whatever tends to make woman feel that she is helpless, that she has not the power within herself to rise, after having once gone aside from the straight and narrow path, — every effort put forth in this direction tends more to curse than to bless. Just so long as you gather them in and care for them as you would for babes or for cripples, just so long you may continue to do so ; but once show them that they can get up and walk erect again, even if they have stumbled, — once show them this, and your work is effectually done.

And more than this : the present state of society wrongs man even more, if possible, than it does woman, from the fact that it, in a measure, promises him impunity in sin ; thus practically tempting him to tempt others, while hiding from him the punishment that must inevitably follow all wrong-doing.

It is not from measures put forth by mistaken philanthropists to save the individual that we can hope for the remedy from the present state of things. This can never accomplish the work : as well talk of dipping a river dry with a bucket. No : we must go back to causes ; we must change public sentiment ; and in no way can this be done so readily as by arousing woman to a sense of her own power, the power that defies disgrace, and dares all



for the right, demanding justice to herself, and according it to others.

During the recent war, I read a protest from a Richmond editor that I shall never forget ; and, could I see that editor, I should delight to take him by the hand and thank him for that protest, for the admission then made.

It seems that there had been a proposition made to chastise a class of women who gave the army a great deal of trouble ; but this man said, “ No : chastise the drunkard or the gambler if you will ; but man has the whole CONTROL of the machinery of society ; and he so manages, that, either directly or indirectly, a certain proportion of these poor creatures are OBLIGED to sell themselves to us for our pleasure.”

Is it not time that woman asserted herself ? Is it not time that she *helped to CONTROL the machinery of society* ? Will such results follow when she has equal rights, equal *control*, in these, in all matters that pertain to the welfare of humanity ?

God speed the day that we can test this question thoroughly ; and, if we fail, we will submit, but not till then.

To this end is this book written, and sent forth upon the sea of literature.

L. W.





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# HELEN HARLOW'S VOW.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE AWAKENING.

" See the maiden in the valley,  
Sitting in the sunshine,  
Pleasant sunshine,  
Of a warm and trusting love." — L. W.



ACK and forth, back and forth in the moonlight, their shadows falling athwart the windows lighting the little cottage sitting-room, walked the lovers upon that autumn evening of the long ago, — so long, that the happiest of the two upon that never-to-be-forgotten night sits now in a home of her own, and thousands of miles from the little spot that was then to her the dearest upon earth, — in a home where little feet sometimes come pattering about her chair, and children's voices are heard lisping " Gran'ma."

The luxuriant locks that then floated around her neck and shoulders in ringlets of glossy brown, — these are now showing an occasional gleam of white, and are smoothly parted back from her high, open forehead, to be confined in a simple knot at the back of the head.



But it is not of the present that we would speak ; not of mature years, but of trusting youth.

Still the lovers continue their walk, and still their shadows fall upon the vine-wreathed window ; while within sits a woman yet in the bloom of life, but upon whose features there rests a shadow. There is an open book before her, from which she seems trying to read ; but the frequent wandering of her eyes, and the occasional clasping of the hands with a quick, nervous movement, as if struggling with mental anguish, — these show plainly that her thoughts are not there.

At length she starts up, puts the book aside, and murmuring to herself, “ This will never do : I must act before it is too late,” goes to the door, and calls, “ Helen, my child.”

“ Yes, mother : I will be in soon,” is the reply ; and the mother resumes her seat, with, “ Dear child, how good and loving she is ! I could not live if harm should come to her.”

The lovers are now upon the steps ; and the mother hears, “ Will you not come in, Edward ? ”

“ Not to-night, but to-morrow, or on Monday,” is the reply.

“ On Monday ? ”

“ Yes. I forgot to tell you that I am expecting some friends from town, though I hardly think they will be here before the first of the week : still, they may come to-morrow ; and, if so, I can not see you again before Monday. Three whole days ! three ages to me. But good-night, darling,” and a kiss, — yes, surely there was a kiss, — and he was gone.

The next moment Helen stood in her mother's pres-



ence, and — “Why, mother, darling mother! what is the matter? You are as white as a sheet!”

“Not a very white sheet, then,” said the mother, trying to smile. “But I am not feeling just well, though nothing serious, nothing to make you look like that: indeed there is not, my child,” she continued, marking the anxious look upon the girl’s face. “But sit down: I wish to talk with you.”

Helen took a stool, and sat down at her mother’s feet, still searching her face as though she would read her very soul. Mrs. Harlow placed her hand upon her daughter’s head, and, shading her eyes with the other, sat for some moments in silence. Just as the silence was becoming painful to the young girl, the mother spoke: —

“You love Edward Granger, my child?”

“Yes, mother.”

“And he loves you?”

“Yes, mother. I have promised to be his wife; and he is coming to-morrow to talk with you about it.”

“Why did he not speak to me about it first? How did he know that I would be willing that he should talk to you upon such a subject?”

“Mother!”

“I am not blaming you, my darling; but it seems to me that an honorable man would at least have spoken to the mother before winning the heart of her only child.”

“Mother!”

“How long have you known Edward Granger, Helen?”

“How long have I known him?”

“Yes: when did you meet him first?”



“At the picnic, one year ago last May.”

“Less than a year and a half since, and you were not fifteen then.”

“And you were married when you were fifteen, mother; for I have heard you say so. You are as young-looking and handsomer than half the girls now; and I know that you could marry, and have some one to love you, when I am gone, were it not for your devotion to my father's memory.”

“When you are gone!” repeated Mrs. Harlow, in a sort of dazed way, as if she hardly comprehended what was said.

“Why, yes, mother. I shall live with Edward, of course. Did you not leave your parents to live with father? But tell me more about father, mother: you have said that you would some time when I was older; and I am sure I am old enough now. Edward says that a girl is old enough to marry when she is sixteen; and, if old enough to marry, certainly I am old enough to be told what you have promised to tell me some time.”

Mrs. Harlow groaned. “My child, I wish I had told you long ago: it might have kept you from trusting too implicitly one whom I fear is not all that you believe him to be.”

“Mother, mother! what do you mean?”

“I mean that I have learned from bitter experience that man is not to be trusted.”

“Not to be trusted! How could you love, if you could not trust?”

“My child, my child! how shall I make your pure nature comprehend the baseness that there is in man's



soul ? How tell you what I must tell you, and perhaps break your heart ? ”

“ Mother ! ”

“ Sit down here, Helen ; ” for in her excitement the girl had risen to her feet : “ right here. Now lay your head upon my knee, and let me hold your hands in mine, while I tell you that your father is a villain ; that he decoyed me away from my parents, promised me marriage, and then forsook me to marry another ; that he still lives, is a rich and honored man in a distant city, — rich and honored, with four sons to call him father, but no daughter.”

“ One daughter, for I live.”

“ Ah ! but the law does not recognize you as his : it gives you no claim upon him, because your mother was not legally married.”

“ But you loved him, mother ? ”

“ I did : God knows how well.”

“ And he promised to marry you, but did not keep his word ? ”

“ He promised, and I believed in him as I believed in God.”

“ Why, then, should the law leave the innocent to suffer, and let the guilty one go ? You intended no wrong, mother, was only blindly trusting ; for how could you love one that you could not believe in ? and how could you marry one that you could not love ? And, further than that, I am his child : I did no wrong in being his child, and why should I suffer ? why should I be deprived of a father’s love and care ? ”

“ You are asking hard questions, my child, too hard for me to answer. We must take things as they are.”



“And make them as they should be ; or, at least, try to do so.”

“It is easy to talk, Helen ; but what can one or two do against the multitude ? ”

“They can at least preserve their own self-respect so far as not to count themselves sinners when only sinned against.”

“What do you mean, Helen ? ”

“I mean that we should not accept the world's judgment of us when we *know* that judgment to be wrong. Yourself, for instance : now, I presume that all these years you have been looking *down* upon yourself, because others, those perhaps who were not worthy to carry your shoes, despised you. For my part, I would not marry a man that I could not trust. Why, the Bible says ‘that wives must submit themselves to their husbands’ as unto the Lord. Great claim a man has to stand in the place of God to woman, if he can not be trusted ! ”

“Such talk as that sounds very fine in theory, Helen ; but you would find it quite a different thing in practice. But where did you get hold of such ideas ? I did not suppose you had ever thought upon these questions.”

“Neither had I : they came to me as new as they do to you. I believe I am naturally confiding, and as naturally despise deception in all its forms. Be that as it may, I believe I am ten years older than I was two hours ago. I feel as if my world had been swept from beneath my feet, and that from henceforth I must make a footing for myself.”

“Helen, Helen ! What do you mean ? ”

“Nothing that I can tell you now, mother ; but rest



assured that I shall never despise myself." Then, taking up a lamp, she pressed a kiss upon her mother's forehead, and hastened away to the quiet of her own room.

She had spoken calmly and firmly ; but her face was pallid to the hue of death, and the light which flashed from her eyes was scorching in its intensity.

" O God ! What is it ? " moaned the wretched woman. " Has he won her but to betray ? If so, let her die. O merciful God ! hear a mother's prayer, and let her die."

And how was it with the daughter ? Ah ! she had indeed lived an age in two short hours ; for in that time doubt had entered her soul, — had entered and probed to depths that she had never dreamed were there, depths into which she trembled to look ; for she was frightened at the possibilities of her own nature, — frightened at what she found herself capable of doing and bearing. She prepared herself for bed as calmly as ever, laid her head upon her pillow as though sleep was sure to come at her bidding ; but it came not, neither did she try to summon it, for she was too busy with thought.

On the following morning, both mother and daughter arose unrefreshed ; for the couch of one had been a couch of tears instead of rest, and the other's a couch of birth : not the birth of wailing flesh and blood, but of a mighty resolve. A few hours had developed a self-sustaining power in the heart of this young girl, gigantic in its proportions.

But few words were spoken during the morning meal. Helen, busy with her own thoughts, did not respond even by a look to her mother's earnest, questioning gaze ;



while the expression upon her face gave that mother a feeling of awe not unmixed with terror. Indeed, the girl looked more like a roused lioness, or an eagle, that, caged, had resolved to be free or die, than like to a shrinking, timid maiden of sixteen summers.

When the duties of the morning were done, Helen put on her bonnet and said, "I shall be back before noon, mother." Then, taking the path which led toward the little lake beyond the grove, was soon lost from sight.

At first, Mrs. Harlow seemed inclined to follow ; but, upon second thought, gave it up. "It will do no good," said she to herself ; "and she will return, for she said she would."

Helen, in the mean time, hastened toward the rustic seat where she had spent so many hours during the preceding weeks with her lover. Not that she expected to meet him there ; but somehow it seemed to her that she must go there, — that she could think clearer : in a word, that the solution of her destiny was there. No : she did not expect to meet Edward Granger there ; for he had promised, that, on that evening, or on the Monday following at the furthest, he would come openly, and ask her of her mother for his wife.

Nevertheless, she had hardly taken her seat before she saw him coming ; but not alone. A gentleman, some of the company he was expecting, thought she, was with him. She did not wish to meet them, but she could not leave without doing so ; and, quick as thought, she resolved to hide. There was a projecting rock close at hand ; and behind this she seated herself, just as the young men came around a curve which brought the place she had vacated fully in sight.



They could not see her, but she could see them, and, when they were seated, hear them too ; for, while she could have touched their heads by reaching her arm across the top of the rock, her face was completely screened by the thick branches of an overhanging tree. Edward would not find her there, would not even think of looking for her ; for he did not know of the spot she occupied. She had discovered it only a few days before, while waiting for him, and had not told him of it ; for, maiden-like, she had resolved to hide there and watch him at some future time, while he waited for her. And now, with scarcely a moment's thought, she found herself there, and watching the movements of two instead of one.

She regretted the step she had taken, when too late ; but only for a moment : for the first word that reached her ear riveted her attention, and drove every feeling from her heart but that of an intense desire to hear more.

"So this is the place where you meet that sweetheart of yours, is it ?" said the stranger lightly.

"This is the place," responded Granger.

"And the little fool thinks you are going to marry her, does she ?"

"And so I did intend to, but " —

"Did intend to ?"

"Yes, I did ; for I really love the girl."

"Why the devil don't you marry her, then ?"

Granger shrugged his shoulders. "The fact is, Reid, she is too yielding. A woman that can be flattered by me before marriage could be flattered by some other man after marriage ; and I want a wife that I can rely upon."



“Poor fellow!” laughed Reid. “I hope you do not love her well enough to break your heart over the matter.”

“Don’t laugh at me, Reid; for in my soul I wish she had been firm.”

“Well, well: now, that is rich! But what are you going to do now? tell her that you have been making a fool of her?”

“No, I can’t do that: her tears would be more than I could stand. She knows that I am expecting company. I shall send her a note that my company has come, and will remain, so that I can not see her until Tuesday instead of Monday. On Monday she gets another, saying that I am called away on unexpected business; and, once away, I shall take good care not to return. I have already written to my father that I will marry the girl of his choice, sending at the same time a formal proposition for her hand; heart she has none. If this girl had remained firm, I should have married for love; as it is, I might as well go to the devil. But I would rather go with money than without it; and Miss Ward has that.”

“And have you no pity for the ruined life of the girl that you confess you love?” asked Reid, speaking seriously for the first time.

“I have, Will; but that which can not stand the test must fall. That’s my doctrine.”

“Hope you will be able to abide by it, then,” said a steady voice close by his side.

“My God, Helen!” exclaimed Granger, starting to his feet. “You here?”

“I am here, sir, — here to thank you for the lesson



you have taught me. It is a poor rule that won't work both ways. If a woman that can be flattered by one man before marriage can be flattered by another after marriage, a man that would flatter, lie, to one woman before marriage would lie to her and flatter others after marriage ; and I want a man that I can trust."

It would have taken a skillful artist to have portrayed the expression of Granger's face as Helen thus addressed him ; while Reid was simply astonished.

"You pity my ruined condition ; but those who can not stand must fall," she continued, fixing her clear gray eye upon his with a gaze that held them. "I want none of your pity, sir. And hear me, Edward Granger : there is no one man that can drag me down. Had you married me while I trusted you, you might possibly have led me to do what my soul condemned ; but I am awake now : my eyes are open, and it can't be done.

"No, sir, I am not ruined : no woman is ruined unless she thinks so. And I here swear in the presence of high Heaven that I will not sink ; that, even with the additional burden you have imposed upon me, I will rise higher than you can ever hope to rise ; and my child shall take a higher position than any child born of an unloving, heartless woman, with you for its father, can possibly reach." And, turning from them, she walked away with the air of a queen by Nature's right, instead of taking the position Granger had expected, — that of a wronged woman, seeking justice, recognition, through marriage with her betrayer.



“ But still the spirit that you see,  
Undaunted by your wiles,  
Draws from its own nobility  
Its high-born smiles,”

murmured Reid, as she passed out of sight.

“ What’s that? ” asked Granger.

“ Only some lines I was reading the other day ; and they seemed so appropriate, that I could not help quoting them,” was the reply.

Granger cast his eyes upon the ground, and sat for some moments in silence ; while Reid, in the mean time, was watching him. He looked up at length, and said, —

“ By the gods ! I believe I have made a mistake, after all.”

“ A mistake ! To be sure you have, Ed ; but you can’t rectify it now. There is the material there for the grandest of women, — a power that you have wakened into life by throwing her from you, which will yet make itself felt. But she will never be yours now.”

“ She has been mine already,” said Granger doggedly.

“ Well, never again, then ; and little cause is left you for satisfaction in thinking of the past. Didn’t she turn the tables on you well, though ! Ha, ha, ha ! Her application of your rule to yourself was rich : she wants a husband that she can trust, as well as you a wife.”

“ Hush, Reid : don’t laugh at me, but help me to win back what I have lost ; for, by the gods, I will marry her now, if I can get her.”

“ You can ‘ buy the gods,’ and sell them too, two or three times over, before you will win her back, I can assure you : besides, what will you do with the other



one? You have made a formal proposition for her hand, and she can hold you to it. Father to disinherit, and the lady to sue for breach of promise: betwixt them both, I don't think you would have much left to support a wife with; and as for your working to maintain one, the idea is simply ridiculous. No, no, Ed: you had better let the girl alone; she will be better off without you than with you."

"Perhaps you intend to win her for yourself?" said Granger, looking up with such an air of distress that Reid burst into another roar of laughter.

"Not the least idea of it, Ed," he replied, as soon as he could speak. "I have better sense than to present another specimen of manly honor for her acceptance so soon after her experience with you: beside which, I am pledged in another direction, and have no desire to break my pledge."

"Ah, indeed! And to whom?"

"Miss Wayne, — Miss Stella Wayne of Boston."

"Wish you much joy, old fellow; but must say, at the same time, that you are exceedingly sympathizing as a friend," said Granger, in tones of bitterness.

"And why should I sympathize with you? I should think congratulation the proper word; for you wished to break with the girl, and you have done it, most effectually too. But, if you need sympathy, you shall have it. And, indeed, I do pity you; 'but those who can not stand the test must fall,' you know."

Granger's only reply to this was to rise and walk abruptly away. Reid looked after him for a moment with a half-amused, half-sad expression; then, picking up his hat, he followed slowly after.



In the mean time, Helen had reached her home, and taken her place at her accustomed duties. Mrs. Harlow looked up as she entered, but did not speak ; for she dare not. There was a look upon the face of her child that told of a decision of some kind, but, whatever it was, an irrevocable one. At length the suspense became too great for further endurance ; and she forced herself to ask, "What is it, Helen ?"

"Nothing, mother ; only that your child must walk in the same path that you have done.

"Oh ! not that, not that ! He will marry you, — he shall !" she fairly shrieked.

"I shall never marry him, mother."

"Why, what have you learned ?"

"I have learned from his own lips that he is a villain ; and I have too much self-respect to want such a character for a husband."

"But what will you do ?"

"Live, bear it, and rise above it."

"You can not : the disgrace is too great. You can never rise above a thing like that : no one ever does."

"Then it is because no one has ever tried hard enough."

"Oh, child, child ! how little you know of the world !"

"It is not so much of the world as of myself that I have need to know ; and I tell you, mother, that I can and I will conquer."

"Better death than such a life, Helen."

"Perhaps so ; but I shall not die : I shall live to wring his heart, and my father's too. 'Such a life !' Why, you are honored, respected, mother ; and why can not I be ?



You have a home, and home comforts, and a child to love you. Surely a man's love is not the all of life."

"The protection of a man's name is about all, to say the least, to a woman who is a mother. Yes, I am respected; but how long would I be so, if the truth was known? I am called *Mrs.* Harlow; am supposed to be a widow."

"That is your business, mother, not mine. I shall never take even the shadow of a man's name for *protection*."

Mrs. Harlow made no reply to this last remark of Helen's; and so there was silence between them for several minutes. At length Helen asked, —

"How came you so far away from all your friends, mother?"

"I had no friends, Helen, — none who would stand by me when I most needed one. My only sister disowned me; my brothers wished me dead, because I was a disgrace to them and theirs; my mother wept, and my father turned me out of doors. Had it not been for my uncle, my father's youngest brother, whose pet and playmate I had been, I might have gone to the county-house; and even he, had he lived, might have turned against me. But, dying about a year before you were born, he left me the bulk of his property. I have always thought that my sister and brothers envied me for this, and, consequently, were more bitter than they otherwise would have been.

"But it was his money that kept me from sinking entirely. After paying an exorbitant price for board and attendance during my sickness, I had two thousand dollars in money, and this little place, of which I knew



nothing, except that it was some two hundred miles away. Sick at heart, and glad to escape from old scenes, I came hither. I was morally a wife, but not legally. My uncle's bequest was made to me in my maiden name. I said I had no friend : I had one, and her name was Harlow, — the Widow Harlow. After the property was made over to me, I sold this place to her, using my first name, instead of hers, in making the deed. This done, she gave the deed to me ; for which service I paid her one hundred dollars. Not that she asked it ; but she was poor, and, for the sake of her child, she consented to take it. I had this all done in another county, where there would be likely to be no questions asked ; and then, taking the money and the deed, I assumed the name of Harlow, and, dressing in widow's weeds, came hither to hide myself from the world I had previously known.

“ I have always intended, when you became old enough to receive the attentions of gentlemen, to tell you the story of your birth ; for I thought that that, if nothing else, would save you from a like fate.”

“ And did my father remain where he was ? ”

“ He did. The fault of his youth was overlooked. In time he became a respected citizen, a judge in the county court ; and, his first wife dying, he is to-day the husband of the sister who cast me off.”

“ And you, my poor mother, had to flee your country, to resort to subterfuge and even crime, to save yourself from further degradation ! O God ! ” she exclaimed, with clasped hands and upturned eyes, “ help woman to help herself ! ”

“ Woman is helpless,” groaned the mother.

“ Of course she is, so long as she thinks so ; but no



longer. 'God helps those who help themselves;' and I believe it, mother."

"Yes; but what can one do alone?"

"Maintain her own self-respect, at least; and I intend to do more."

The mother looked upon her child, and wondered; but nothing further was said.

Some two weeks afterward, Helen saw the announcement of the marriage of Edward Granger, Esq., to Miss Ella, only daughter of the Hon. W. E. Ward of ——. She read it, and smiled a bitter smile, but made no comment.

Great was the excitement in the little community when it was known that Helen Harlow was likely to become a mother; but Helen kept her own council. She would give them no satisfaction; neither would she consent that her mother should. Her only reply to their questioning was, "The child is mine, and I expect to take care of it; and that is enough."

The storm of persecution raged terribly for a while, — so much so, that Mrs. Harlow proposed to sell out, and leave the place; but Helen still said, "No, mother: I can die, but I will not run;" and finally things calmed down, took the form of settled contempt, and the two lone women were left to themselves.

Two lone women, objects of the world's bitter hate, because they, or at least the youngest and fairest, had dared to brave its injustice, had refused to be crushed at its bidding! A shameless, bold-faced hussy, they called her, — one destitute of all womanly feeling; and all because she suffered, and gave no sign of the anguish upon which they had thought to feast. For a martyr



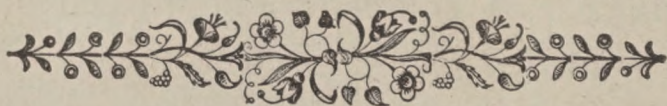
triumphing in the midst of the flames they had no sympathy.

For two years after the birth of her boy, Helen Harlow remained at Lake Grove; but giving no sign the while to the outside world, nor yet even to her mother, further than could be judged from an occasional remark, of the purpose, the plans, of her future life.

By judicious questioning, she had learned her father's name and place of residence, and her boy was called for him; also the first name of the woman who had befriended her mother. One morning, soon after little Charles's second birthday, she said very quietly, —

“Mother, I am going away. I can not tell just how long I shall be absent, perhaps for several months; but I want you to take good care of my boy till I return.”

Mrs. Harlow looked up with a question upon her lips; but the expression upon Helen's face told her that it would be of no use to ask it, and so she was silent. The little community was again thrown into a buzz of excitement. Where had she gone? and when would she return? And, failing to satisfy their curiosity, they very charitably decided that she had gone where the like of her ought to go. “What else could be expected, to be sure?”





## CHAPTER II.

## A JUDGE IN TROUBLE.

“Ah, yes! when years have fled,  
The ghost of past misdeeds takes form  
Within the living present, — a *living*,  
Not a *ghostly* form. Shrink as we may,  
Still we must meet and grapple with  
The stern reality, till pang for pang  
Makes good the claim of justice.” — L. W.



JUDGE EDSON sat within his cosy office, thinking, deeply thinking. A glass of Rhenish wine had quickened his great brain to action, and now the choice Havana strengthened its cogitations. An honorable man this judge, — a most honorable man; and care he had for good of State, its wealth and power, its moral power; for he a Christian was, and claimed that only those, who, sanctified by grace of God, had thus been fitted for the place, had right to hold the reins of power.

This man, this Christian judge, had, in his youth, been somewhat wild, — had *sown* “wild oats;” but now, redeemed, made pure, a child of God, he never should be called to *reap that crop*. Let children of the Evil One do that: ’twas fit they should. And so this Christian man sat there, and thought great thoughts of woman’s love of dress, her recklessness of cost, its evil



tendency, how it was dragging down the world, that else would rise to higher planes of purity. What should be done? how could a stop be put thereto?

What the conclusion might have been when cleared from smoke, the world will never know; for, lo! a knock, a woman's knock, breaks in upon the train of his reflections. "Come," he was about to say; but, checking himself, he arose and opened the door.

"Is this Judge Edson's office?" asked a quiet, firm voice.

"It is. Will you walk in?" said he, in his most deferential tones, to the veiled figure before him.

"Charles Edson, son of F. W. Edson?"

"The same, madam, or" —

"Miss, if you please."

"The same, miss. Take a seat," he continued, handing her at the same time the best chair in the room. He had noted, in the mean time, the perfect symmetry of her form, and decided that she must be handsome; but this he could not know positively, for the lady still kept her face veiled.

"May I know whom I have the honor of addressing?" he asked after a pause.

"Presently. I wish to ask you a few questions first."

"Certainly, certainly. I shall consider myself honored if I can serve you in any manner."

"Mr. Edson, have you a family?"

"I have," he replied, wondering within himself what connection that fact could have with the stranger's business.

"How large a family?"

"A wife and four children."



“Sons, or daughters?”

“All sons,” he answered, wondering more and more at this strange questioning.

“Are these the children of your second or third wife?”

“My second or third wife! What is the meaning of this? I have no third wife.”

“Nothing strange, sir, that you should count out a wife as well as a child; but the woman you are now living with is your third wife, and you have a daughter.”

“’Tis false!” exclaimed the judge, springing to his feet. “And who are you, that you dare to make such an assertion?”

The veil was thrown back, and a pair of clear gray eyes met his own. “I am Helen Edson, the daughter of your first wife. So far as the spirit of marriage is concerned, she was your wife; though you were *honorable* enough to cheat her out of the form, and cast her off, that you might take to your *pure bosom* another bride.”

“My God!” groaned the judge, as he sank back into his seat, and fixed his eyes on the speaker with a look of blank terror. “What do you want?” he at length gasped.

“Mr. Edson, by no fault of theirs you are the father of five children. Through the action of your life they came into existence; and they, each and all, one no more than the other, have claims upon you.” The speaker paused to note the effect of her words; and the judge, as he marked the approach to his pocket, assumed a cold and hard expression, while the single ejaculation “Ah!” escaped his lips.



“Yes,” continued the girl, after a moment’s silence: “they have claims upon you, — claims such as one who sits in the seat of judgment, and metes out justice to his fellow-men, should be perfectly willing to accord.” Again the calm gray eye was fixed upon the judge, till, growing restless beneath its power, he again asked, “What do you want?”

“It would have been more fatherly to have said, ‘What do you want, my child?’ but it matters not. I have lived without a father’s love till now, and can continue to do so,” she added in tones half mocking, half sad; “but I will tell you what I want, and what I intend to have. You” —

“Do you threaten?” he demanded in an excited tone.

“Not unless you make it necessary, sir; but I was about to comply with your request by telling you what I want. You have a large farm, an extensive practice, five children, and five thousand dollars in the bank. One of those children, the eldest, and a daughter, has never received a father’s care nor a dollar of his money; and she now asks that one of those five thousands be paid into her own hands for her exclusive use and control. Is that too much?”

“Too much or not, it is more than you will ever get. Girl, what do you mean by coming here with a tale like this? And, even if it were true, how do I know that you are the child? that you are not an impostor?”

For all answer to this, Helen Harlow, or Edson, as the true name was, sprang to her feet, and, taking the judge by the arm, brought him directly in front of the



mirror, placing herself beside him in such a manner that the light from the lamp fell fairly upon both faces. "Look!" said she, "and call me an impostor if you dare."

He did look; and the resemblance was too apparent to be denied.

"Do you wish me to go through the length and breadth of your town with that face uncovered?" she asked.

"I presume you have done that now," he replied, with a tremor in his voice which showed that he feared it.

"Do not judge me by yourself, if I am your child," she responded. "I should scorn to threaten that which I had already done."

"But what good would it do you?"

"None; only as a weapon to force a judge to justice."

"Force! And do you dare use the word force to me?" he thundered.

"Why, father, if 'neither words nor grass will do, I must try what virtue there is in stones.' I read that long ago in an old-fashioned book; and you know the moral, I suppose. If not, I will repeat it: 'If kind words and gentle means will not reclaim the wicked, they must be dealt with in a more severe manner.'"

Judge Edson was, for the moment, fairly nonplussed. He knew from the look in the girl's eye that she would dare any thing; and to have that old story "raked up" from beneath the ashes of so many years was more than he dared to think of. For a moment he felt inclined to grant her request, and let her go; but, his anger getting



the better of his judgment, he opened the door and said, —

“Go ; and never dare to call me father again.”

She arose, bowed, said very coolly, “You are excited, father. I will wait till you have had time to think of this matter, and then call again. Good-night ;” and, gliding past him like a spirit, she was gone.

For a few moments the judge felt relieved ; and then, his fears returning upon him with redoubled force, he would fain have called her back, but it was too late. For some days after the above occurrence, Judge Edson exhibited a nervousness of manner so unlike his usual self, that it attracted the attention of his friends. He accounted for it by saying that he believed he was not well. He would start at every sound ; try to catch every word of any conversation going on near him ; watch for every new face, and especially for every veiled one : but, seeing nor hearing nothing further of his unwelcome visitor, he began to hope that the matter was at an end ; that her real aim was to frighten him ; and, this done, nothing further would be attempted.

“Surely,” said he to himself, “she is not fool enough to think she can get a thousand dollars from me !”

Vain hope ! Some two weeks afterwards, court was held in the place, and Judge Edson presided. A case of the most interesting character was to be tried ; and people were there from all parts of the district. The courtroom was crowded ; and all was going on swimmingly, when the judge was seen to pale suddenly, and put his hand out as if to keep himself from falling. “Only a little faintness ; but it is gone now,” said he to the assistant judge, who sprang to help him.



The momentary confusion past, he looked again ; and again the veil was raised, till he met the full gaze of the clear gray eye. Yes, there she was, and no mistake ; and, should she unveil herself to that audience, the resemblance could not fail to attract attention. Would she do it ? And, though forced to wear the appearance of calmness, the strong man quaked internally, as though stricken with an ague-fit.

“ Coward ! ” said Helen to herself, as she looked upon him. “ If he quakes thus in my presence, how will he meet death and the judgment ? If he trembles in the presence of his child, how will he stand before his Maker ? ”

But the trial went on without further interruption ; and none but the parties concerned knew of that other trial, in which the judge himself was prisoner, and a fair young mother both judge and jury.

It may seem strange to a superficial observer, that Judge Edson should so shrink from having the “ indiscretion ” of his youth brought to the notice of the public again ; and more especially as he was well aware that the older residents of the place knew of it already. But men, notwithstanding their superior physical strength, are really more cowardly than women. They will leave a woman to bear disgrace, to meet the world’s scorn, alone : they will do this oftentimes, not because they really mean to be villains, but because they are too cowardly to share the disgrace which they are the chief actors in incurring.

True, the older residents knew of the past ; but “ out of sight, out of mind ” was applicable here as well as elsewhere. So many years had passed, and all traces



of that folly had so long since disappeared, that, doubtless, they seldom thought of it. And, further, the town was not one-half as large then as now ; and many who were there then had since removed to other places : so that, altogether, there were comparatively but a few who knew it ; and they would be likely to think of it but seldom, unless something should occur to bring it to their minds anew. And, more than all, he was simply Charles Edson then,—a young man, and but little known : now he was an honorable judge, and had a good prospect, through the suffrage of the people, of being chosen representative at the next election.

So you see that he was really in trouble ; for, if Helen made good her threat, her likeness to him, in connection with former facts, would establish her claim in the minds of the people ; and would they vote for him then ? But, if he gave her the thousand, and sent her away, it would make so large a draft upon his ready money, that he could not spend what he wished to for electioneering purposes. As it generally proves with those who refuse responsibilities that belong to them, that which he had ignored had come back to him with interest, and at a time when he could least bear it.

Well, those that sow must reap ; and, if we refuse the first crop, it becomes self-sowing, with increased harvests that still await our hands.

Just before the closing of the court, the veiled figure retired, and the judge felt relieved when no longer conscious of the criticism of those quiet gray eyes. But the relief was only temporary ; for, as he emerged from the building, the same figure moved to his side, and placed a note in his hand. He thrust it quickly into his pocket,



glancing around at the same time to see if the movement was noticed.

“Who is she?” asked a voice at his elbow. And there stood the man who of all others he could have wished elsewhere, — his opponent in the coming election.

“A stranger, I should judge from her appearance. I did not see her face.”

“Business, of course,” said the other, in a tone that brought the blood to the judge’s face.

“I presume I can inform you when I have myself learned the import thereof,” said he, with a freezing dignity that forbade further questioning.

“I will bid you good-evening then,” replied the questioner, in a manner that nettled the judge worse than ever.

I will not attempt to give my readers the sum and substance of the judge’s reflections as he hastened home; but will leave to them the pleasing task, if pleasing it be, of imagining for themselves the nature thereof.

Once safe at home in his own room, and the door locked, he proceeded to read Helen’s note. It contained the not very pleasing intelligence that the writer could not wait much longer for a decision upon the matter under consideration; and requested his presence that evening at Mrs. Mary Harlow’s, between the hours of seven and eight o’clock.

“Good heavens! this girl will drive me mad!” was his mental ejaculation. “I am engaged out with my wife this evening; and it will not do to put her off, that is certain. O these unyielding, tyrannical women! how much happier I should have been, had I married



this girl's mother in the first place. And they are sisters too! Well, I might have known that a woman who would cast off her own sister, and afterward marry the man who ruined her,—I might have known that she would not make a very loving or lovable wife. But what am I to do?"

The answer to the above question finally took the following form:—

"MISS HELEN,—It is utterly impossible for me to see you to-night; but I can come to-morrow evening at the hour named, if convenient to you."

This written, the next question was as to how it should be sent; for our brave judge had become strangely timid, and seemed to imagine that everybody was thinking of and looking after him. He took his hat, and sauntered out; and by the merest chance, of course, he soon found himself in the vicinity of Mrs. Harlow's dwelling. A small boy was trundling his hoop near the door; to him the note was given, together with a dime, if he would give it to the young lady, having first penciled upon the back of it, "Tell the boy to say to me, 'Yes,' if you can see me then."

Helen smiled as she read the note, gave the required 'Yes,' and then handed it to her friend.

"He will be here, and will comply with your demand too," was that lady's quiet response.

The lad, as he came out of the gate, shouted to the judge, who was walking at a little distance, "She says 'Yes;'" too eager to return to his hoop to take the time to approach near enough to give the reply in an ordinary tone.

The judge now quickened his footsteps, but had not



walked a half a square before he saw Mr. Green, the political opponent who had so annoyed him some two hours before, coming around the corner.

Now, Mr. Green had neither seen nor heard any thing of the above: but it seemed to the excited imagination of Edson as if all things were conspiring against him; and he mentally resolved that Helen should leave the place, if he had to pay her two thousand dollars, instead of one.

The next evening, at the appointed hour, the judge was at the place designated. But Helen was not alone in the little parlor: her friend, Mrs. Harlow, was quietly seated, with work in hand, and gave no indication of leaving.

"Mr. Edson," said Helen, after a few moments' silence, "the presence of this lady will make no difference with what we have to say. She is a friend of my mother's, knew her, and stood by her when you betrayed and forsook her; and I desire her to remain as a witness of what is said and done here to-night."

The judge "hem'd, haw'd," cleared his throat some two or three times, and finally said, —

"Well, miss, do you still persist in the absurd claim that you made the other night?"

"I persist in the claim, Mr. Edson, — a claim that is most just; though it may seem absurd to you, judge as you are called, that justice should be done."

The judge winced. "But justice and your conception thereof may not be exactly the same thing, miss."

"Edson, if you please," said Helen coolly.

"I deny it: you have no legal right to that name," said the judge excitedly.



“No *legal right*, but an actual right, sir, — the *right* of having the same blood in my veins, but not the *honor*; for I do not consider it an honor.”

“And do you think to gain your point by insulting me, girl?”

“Just as you can afford, sir,” was the quiet reply.

There was silence for several seconds, and again the judge burst forth with, “It is because you think you have me in your power, that you would thus take advantage of me. You deserve to be prosecuted for trying to get money under false pretenses.”

“I have made no false pretenses, Mr. Edson; and, if you are in my power, you placed yourself there, when you gave me being.”

Mrs. Harlow now spoke, for the first time. “Judge Edson, it looks well for you to talk of being taken advantage of because one has the power, considering the course you pursued toward this girl’s mother!”

“And have you known, all these years, where she was?” was the unexpected reply to this thrust.

“I have, sir.”

“I might have known it; for I now remember that it was you to whom she sold her Western land. What became of that land?”

“I suppose it is there yet: I do not imagine that any one has carried it away.”

Helen laughed at this retort; while the judge amended by saying, “You know what I mean, Mrs. Harlow: who owns it now?”

“I sold it long ago; and it could have changed hands a dozen times since.”

“Well, well: I don’t care about the land; but I wish



I could have known where Julia was when Susan died."

"And why do you wish that?"

"I would have married her; that is — if she had not been married already."

"You would!" said Helen in a tone of cutting irony.

The judge looked up, as if at loss to divine her meaning.

"Very certain that she would have accepted you!" she continued in the same tone.

"Of course, Helen," said Mrs. Harlow. "The possibility that a woman who has been in a man's power could say 'No' to him has never once entered the judge's thoughts."

"I see," answered Helen. "Man expects only forgiveness and love from woman, no matter how much he may have wronged her. He can bring her into disgrace, leave her in sorrow and loneliness for years, and then expect that she will, of course, be only too glad to accept him when he chooses to say the word. But it seems that we have wandered from the subject. I want your decision, Mr. Edson, upon another question than marriage."

Again there was silence in the room, broken, at last, by the question, "And suppose I accede to your demands?"

"I will return to my home, and give you no further trouble," was the reply.

"And where is your home?"

"That question has no bearing whatever upon the business in hand," was the prompt response.

"But what security have I that you will keep your promise?"



“The assurance of one who has never yet proved false to her word, if she is your child.” The quiet eyes were fixed upon him as if she would read his very soul, as she uttered these cutting words.

Another silence. Judge Edson seemed to be in the condition of one who has a troublesome tooth, and has determined that it must be pulled, but still shrinks from the final wrench.

“What name shall I use, if I fill out a draft for you?” he asked at length.

“I do not think you had better fill out a draft for me,” she replied.

“Why?” he questioned, with evident surprise.

“Because you will defeat your own object, — that of secrecy. The fact of my calling for so much money, as coming from you, will be noted and commented upon; and more especially at this time, when your political opponents are on the lookout for something from which to make capital against you.”

“And you have taken all these things into consideration?” he exclaimed in a tone of bitterness.

“Certainly, sir: if strategy is used in compassing an unholy end, may it not also be used in attaining the ends of justice?”

“But what would you have me do, if I am not to fill out a draft?”

“It seems to me, sir, that you are not very clear-headed for a judge. Can you not draw the money yourself, and bring it to me?”

“When?”

“To-morrow evening, so that I can be in readiness to take the stage on the following morning.”



“I will do so,” he responded, jerking the words out as if they choked him. “I wish you good-evening!” And, taking his hat, he moved off, as though relieved of a heavy load.

Indeed, he was surprised at himself: the sensation was so new and strange, — that of feeling that he had, in part at least, compensated for the wrong of the long ago. He was true to his promise. The money was forthcoming; and, notwithstanding his forebodings, he was successful as a candidate; went to the State Legislature, and made his mark there too; and afterward, while analyzing his own feelings in tracing the causes which led to his election, he came to the honest conclusion that that thousand dollars had more to do with his success than any other one thing.

“For,” said he, in talking with an intimate friend upon the subject, “I did not know how heavy a load I was carrying, till a portion of it was removed. The consciousness of wrong-doing, even though that wrong was so far in the past, weighed upon my spirit; and that act of partial justice so lightened the load, that the sunshine of my soul, lighting up my features, drew more to me than the money would have done, I verily believe.”





## CHAPTER III.

## CHARITABLE CONCLUSIONS.

"The voice of charity is kind;  
She thinketh nothing wrong:  
To every fault she seemeth blind,  
Nor vaunteth with her tongue.

"In penitence she placeth faith;  
Hope smileth at her door;  
Relieveth first, then softly saith,  
'Go, brother, sin no more.'"

"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." — BIBLE.



WILLIAM REID was standing on the steps of Lighthouse Inn, so called from the fact that its east chamber overlooked the little lake, and a light placed therein served as a guide to parties sailing upon its bosom the pleasant autumn evenings.

It was the first time that he had been in the vicinity since the visit made on that memorable time when Helen had so startled him and Granger by her sudden and unexpected appearance. Change had been busy with his life-line, crossing it once with the bridal wreath, and again with the cypress and the shroud. And now, with his heart filled with tender memories of the vinelike nature whose loving arms had clung to him till loosened by death, his thoughts would wander toward the fair girl so deeply wronged, and yet so strong in her self-assertion.



“I wonder if she is still here? and how she has stood the storm?” he mentally asked.

William Reid had good cause to remember Helen Harlow; for she had changed the current of his life-thoughts, and made a better man of him. Her application of Granger’s rules to himself had started a train of ideas, which, matured, had given him better, more just conceptions of life’s relations, and thereby transformed the comparatively thoughtless youth into the reflecting man. He was standing just at that point of life in which a word, a breath of influence, may fix the character of future years, either for good or ill; he was standing just there, when her firm self-assertion opened his eyes to the great wrong that man and society at large is constantly inflicting upon woman.

And, more than this, it had taught him to wonder at the readiness with which woman acquiesces in this wrong; yielding to man’s demand for the abnegation of self-respect, when it must fall upon herself, and joining with him, yea, even going beyond him, in enforcing it against others. “Why is it?” was the question, that, in such a state of mind, he very naturally asked; but, as yet, he had not found the solution.

“I wonder if she is still here?” And, thus musing, he instinctively took the path leading to the retreat occupied by Granger and himself when she had burst in upon them, looking so like a goddess, with wrath roused to the white heat, — that steady heat from which undying purposes are formed.

Reaching the place, he had the curiosity to examine it, in order to find how it was that she was so near to them as to hear what they said, and yet so completely hidden



from them. Having found the spot, he very naturally seated himself in it. Absorbed in his own thoughts, he did not notice the approach of another party, till it was too late to retreat. Two ladies had, almost before he was aware, taken the seat occupied by him and Granger on the former occasion.

“Well, really,” said he to himself: “this place seems to be fated to be one of adventure to me.”

Prompted by a sense of honor, he was about to make his presence known, when the words, “For my part, I think that Helen Harlow manifests an amount of brazen-fazed hardihood perfectly astounding for one so young,” fell upon his ear, and made him wish to hear more.

“She has returned, you say?” was the response.

“Yes, she came last week; and black Susan tells me that she bought herself and her mother a nice new dress, some things for her boy, and a number of very nice books: and now, *where does the money come from?*”

“There is but one answer to that, I fear. But what else could you expect from one who could do as she has done, and then justify herself in it?”

“Yes; but why couldn't she stay away when she was away, instead of coming back here to tempt our husbands, brothers, and sons? For my part, I don't intend to put up with it. She shall leave the place, if we have to burn the house over her head.”

“So far as that is concerned, I am not afraid of my husband's going there.”

“Neither am I of mine. I have perfect confidence in him, — that is, as much as I have in any man. I think the best of them need watching.”

“Perhaps so; but we have no evidence that any one



about here ever goes there. And as to burning the house, that would be too bad: poor Mrs. Harlow has trouble enough now."

"Neither can we learn who is the father of her child. It may be your husband or mine, for aught we know."

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense or not, Mrs. Sherwood, when one is so sly, we never know what to expect. I do not believe that even her mother knows where she has been: for I count myself no fool when I undertake a thing; and I am sure, that, if she did know, I could have picked it out of her."

"What does Helen say about it?"

"I have not heard her say any thing; but Susan says that she overheard her saying something to her mother about her father."

"Her father! I thought he was dead."

"Well, that don't make it so. For my part, I don't believe that Mrs. Harlow herself is any better than she should be. You know, Mrs. Sherwood, that we could never get her into the church. Our minister — perhaps you don't remember the one we had when she first came here — well, he was one of the most interesting men I ever knew; and the heart that wouldn't melt under his ministrations must have been very hard indeed. He used to call on, talk, and pray with her; but it was of no use. He told me, that if God did not, in his infinite mercy, interfere in her behalf, there could be no hope for her."

"That is bad, very bad."

"So I think; and, beside, if she has any friends or relatives anywhere, where are they? and why don't she write to them or hear from them?"



“Perhaps she does. I hardly think, Mrs. Grant, that it is exactly in accordance with the spirit of true charity to decide that a thing is wrong because we do not understand it.”

“Certainly not. I was telling husband, only last night, that we ought to be more charitable, and especially toward our brothers and sisters in the church. Here’s poor Brother Smith: how they have scandalized him. But I don’t believe a word of it, I don’t. We should remember, Sister Sherwood, that there is our poor fallen nature to contend with, and the world’s people trying to drag us down all the time. That’s just what I think: we should be more charitable.”

“But what reason have you for thinking that she does not write to or hear from her friends?”

“Well, you see, it seemed rather strange to me that she never talked about them; and I have thought of it so much, especially since this affair of Helen’s: so I inquired of the postmaster; and he tells me, that, once in a great while, there is a letter addressed to a Mrs. Harlow somewhere in Maine; and, after about so long a time, there is certain to come a letter addressed to this Mrs. Harlow; and that these letters are always in the same handwriting,—that is, there are none sent from this office to other individuals that are in the same handwriting with those sent to the Mrs. Harlow I have spoken of; and all that come to the Mrs. Harlow here are in the same hand.”

“Well, really, Mrs. Grant, you have taken more pains than I should ever have thought of doing.”

“It takes me to find out things, Mrs. Sherwood; and you know the good Book says that we must be ‘as wise as serpents,’ as well ‘as harmless as doves.’”



“Mighty harmless you are!” thought Reid, as he listened.

“But this is not all,” continued our female spy. “I think, when we have doubtful characters amongst us, that we have a right to learn what we can in any lawful manner which may present itself; indeed, that any means are lawful that will unearth crime. Paul says that ‘all things are lawful,’ — he was talking of Christians, to be sure, — that ‘all things are lawful; but all things are not expedient.’

“Well, I once asked Mrs. Harlow what her maiden name was; and her reply was, ‘Harlow. I did not change my name in marrying.’ And, when I questioned her further of her relatives, she answered, —

“‘Our family band has been broken by death, and there are but few of us left.’ And I had hardly left the house, when that brazen-faced creature, Helen, said so loudly that I heard it, —

“‘Why didn’t you tell her it was none of her business, mother?’

“‘None of my business, indeed! I will show you, miss, whether it is my business or not,’ thought I. So I wrote to the place from which Mrs. Harlow said she came when she came here, and received for reply that no one of the name had ever resided there. I then wrote to the place where those letters that go from this office to a Mrs. Harlow are always directed, and learned that there had never been but one person there of that name, and she was there still. So, you see, Mrs. Sherwood, that there is something wrong somewhere.”

“I fear that there is. But what can we do about it?”



“Drive them away, as I said. But here comes Sallie Shaw, and Mrs. Fitzhammer, the lawyer’s wife. How do you do, ladies? I am so glad to meet you!”

“How do you do, Mrs. Grant? And Mrs. Sherwood too? Well, this is an unexpected pleasure, I must say. Mrs. Fitzhammer, Mrs. Sherwood, — a new acquisition to our little society.”

“What’s the news, Sallie?” asked Mrs. Grant, as soon as they were fairly seated.

Miss Shaw, a maiden lady of uncertain age, drew herself up somewhat stiffly.

“Mrs. Grant, I wish you would call me by my real name, instead of by that childish pet-name.”

“Indeed, Sarah, I forgot myself entirely.”

“Oh! of course, it is pardonable in an old friend like you, Mrs. Grant: still, it has become such a habit with my particular friends, that, if I do not protest, every one will be calling me so; and that would not be quite so pleasant.”

“I think,” said Mrs. Fitzhammer, “that young ladies like yourself, Miss Shaw, should always be addressed as Miss. This calling one by the first name does well enough for children; but, with grown people, it has a Quakerish sort of look, that is really not very genteel.”

“I think you are quite right, Mrs. Fitzhammer,” said Miss Shaw: “but you must recollect that we have not had the advantages of city-life as you have; and, if you will be so good as to overlook our mistakes, we hope to profit somewhat by being in your society.”

Mrs. Fitzhammer smiled graciously, and Miss Shaw continued, —

“You asked for the news, Mrs. Grant. The latest



that I have heard is, that that detestable Helen Harlow has returned. Too bad, isn't it, that we should have such characters in our midst?"

"Just what we were talking about when you came up."

"This Helen Harlow, Mrs. Fitzhammer," said Miss Shaw, turning to her friend, "is one of those shameless creatures that a pure woman blushes to mention; and, of course, as she has been absent from the place, you have not heard her named since you have been here."

"Helen Harlow! Helen Harlow! Yes: that's the name, I am sure," said Mrs. Fitzhammer.

"What?" "What is it?" "Do you know her?" questioned the three ladies in chorus.

"No, I do not know her; but I am certain that it is the same one who is making cousin Ella Granger so unhappy."

"Indeed!" "Pray tell us about it." "I thought that we should get a clew some time," were the simultaneous utterances.

"The facts of the case are these, ladies," said Mrs. Fitzhammer. "Cousin Ella Ward of Tipton was married some three years since to a man by the name of Granger."

"Edward Granger?" asked Mrs. Grant.

"The same," was the reply.

"I knew him well, Mrs. Fitzhammer. He used to visit here; and, at one time, I fancied that he was in love with our Sarah here."

"O Mrs. Grant! what nonsense!"

"Of course, my dear, there was nothing in it. He was a splendid fellow, though. And so he married a cousin



of yours, Mrs. Fitzhammer? Well, this is really interesting news: I feel as if we were old friends, almost. I must tell my husband of this; for he always thought so much of Mr. Granger, that he will be only too happy to make your acquaintance."

"But what of Helen Harlow?" asked Miss Shaw in an impatient tone; for she did not like being reminded so pointedly of the failure of her plans in reference to Mr. Granger.

"Yes: that is what I was going to tell you, ladies. The engagement was a short one, he seeming unwilling to wait; and cousin, in her innocence, imagined that it was from the ardor of his attachment. But her married life has not been a happy one."

"And this Helen Harlow is the cause of it!" exclaimed Mrs. Grant.

"I am certain that is the name," continued Mrs. Fitzhammer. "Cousin now thinks that Granger married her for her money, and that he loves some one else."

"Poor woman!" sighed Miss Shaw.

"Cousin says that they had not been married a month before Mr. Granger took to having absent, gloomy spells; and that, at such times, he is sure to be restless in his sleep; will mutter and complain; and that, sometimes, she can understand a word or two. Once she heard him say, 'Helen, darling;' and at another time, 'Helen, don't, don't leave me;' and once she caught another name, which she says sounded like Harlin, Harlow, or something of the kind. He has been absent for the last month, — been to New-York City, he says. He only returned last week; and I received a letter from her to-day. But she thinks that he has been with this Helen."



“There, Mrs. Sherwood: I knew that my suspicions were not groundless!” cried Mrs. Grant. “I don’t feel so about things for nothing. It’s a warning, — this suspicion that will come in spite of us.”

“I fear you are right,” said Mrs. Sherwood.

“Of course, I am. When we do right, our good angels are sure to warn us by making us shrink from unworthy characters.”

“Do you really believe that?” asked Miss Shaw.

“Of course I do. The Bible says that they, the angels as I understand it, are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. And what is the use of ministering spirits, if they cannot minister unto us, — cannot make their warnings and encouragements felt in some manner?”

“I know, Mrs. Grant, that it looks reasonable; but then the angels are so holy, and we so sinful, that I always shrink when I think of it,” said Mrs. Sherwood with a sigh.

“I don’t know why we should be too humble to accept what God promises, Sister Sherwood. It seems to me that you lack in faith. Why, when our good minister sings, —

‘Angels now are hovering round us,  
Unperceived amidst the throng,’

I sometimes fancy that I can almost see them.”

“But what are we to do about this miserable creature?” asked Miss Shaw.

“Helen Harlow? Drive her away, of course: that is just what I was telling Sister Sherwood here, when you came up.”

“But how?”



“If it can't be done in one way, we must try another. If she were penitent, now, it would be quite a different thing; but carrying on an intrigue with a married man, and breaking his wife's heart, — it is too shameless to be borne!”

“Then she has a heart, after all. Granger thought she was heartless; but he was mistaken about Helen, and why not here?” was Reid's inward comment.

The trio — for Mrs. Sherwood could hardly be said to join them — went on with their plans; one suggesting one thing, and another another, till Reid, becoming tired of his confinement, began to cast about for some means of escape.

“I have half a mind to frighten them,” thought he. “It would be sport to see them run, and especially that courageous Mrs. Grant. I am quite certain that she would show her faith in angel guardianship by a speedy flight.” And, to try the effect, he gave a slight groan.

“What's that?” exclaimed Miss Shaw, starting to her feet.

“What's what?” asked Mrs. Sherwood.

“Why, that noise.”

“I heard nothing. What did it sound like?” said Mrs. Grant, putting on a bold look, though evidently trembling.

“Like some one in distress. It seemed to come from the hill above us.”

“Oh, dear! I'm so frightened! I shall faint, I know I shall,” gasped Mrs. Fitzhammer, sinking back like one almost gone.

“Don't, don't! Oh! what shall we do?” cried Mrs. Grant and Miss Shaw both at once.



“There is nothing to be frightened about,” said Mrs. Sherwood. “Sallie is always imagining something. I presume it was the wind in the branches above us.” Just then there came another moan, a little louder than the first.

They all heard it ; and the fainting woman, springing to her feet, made good use of them by leaving the place as fast as possible. The other two followed hard after ; while Mrs. Sherwood moved more leisurely, smiling to herself, and saying, —

“What cowards ! Some animal — a cat or dog — asleep or in pain, perhaps. I have heard our Tray make worse noises than that when asleep.”

Reid waited till they were fairly out of sight, and then took his way leisurely back to town.

Retiring early, he pondered long and seriously upon the matter, and finally resolved to seek Helen, and make her acquaintance.

Accordingly, the next day, he made an excuse to call at Mrs. Harlow’s house. Helen sat with her foot upon the cradle, rocking her sleeping boy from time to time, as he showed signs of restlessness, and holding in her hand a volume of ancient history, in which she seemed much interested, for she barely glanced at the stranger.

He asked for a glass of water ; then made some remarks about her place, and inquired if she would dispose of it.

“I would if my daughter would consent ; but she is not willing to leave here,” was the reply.

Reid had made the inquiry for the purpose of entering into conversation more than any thing else. He now glanced toward Helen ; but she did not raise her eyes



from her book : and, as a desperate resort to gain her attention, he said, —

“I hope that I may be able to make your daughter think favorably of my proposition. I have always admired the place since I was through here, nearly three years since, with my friend Granger.”

Mrs. Harlow blushed ; and Helen looked him calmly in the face for a moment, and then said, —

“I should think your more especial admiration would be given to the seat by the lake.”

“Miss Harlow, I see that you recollect me ; and I am glad of it, for it will make what I have to say the easier. I shall never forget that hour ; neither can the influence of your truthful words be effaced from my soul. I have wedded since then the woman of my choice ; cherished her till the grave snatched her from my arms. But, from that time to this, I have respected you ; and to-day there is no woman on earth who holds so large a place in my heart.”

Helen dropped her book, rose to her feet, and, clasping her hands with a spasmodical movement, thrust them out in front, as if to ward him off.

“What do you mean ?” she exclaimed : “coming here to mock me with the semblance of respect ! No one respects me now,” she continued, glancing at her boy, — “no one but myself ; and do not think to rob me of that.”

The touching pathos of her appeal, words cannot express ; and, for a moment, Reid had no power to reply. Indeed, he did not reply to her ; but, turning to her mother, said, —

“Madam, help me to convince your daughter that



there is at least one man in the world who is honorable.”

Mrs. Harlow glanced from one to the other with a bewildered air, and finally asked, “What do you wish, sir?”

“I wish to be your friend and hers. I know how cruelly she has been wronged. I know the man who wronged her. I know how unjustly society is dealing with you both; and I wish to help you stem the tide of injustice.”

“You can not help us, sir. We do not ask your help, nor any one’s. We only ask to be let alone,” said Mrs. Harlow.

“Your coming here will only injure us; and our load was hard enough to bear before. I must request you to stay away in future,” added Helen, having so far recovered her self-control as to speak calmly.

“There is one way in which I can help you, if you are not too proud to accept it,” he said.

She looked at him inquiringly. “As my wife, they will not dare to insult you,” he continued.

Again that involuntary movement of the hands, accompanied with “Don’t; don’t tempt me from my purpose.”

“I will leave you now,” he said, “but will return in just one month for my answer;” and, taking a pencil and a slip of paper from his pocket, he wrote his name and address; giving this to Mrs. Harlow, with “Make all the inquiries you wish in reference to my character, position, &c.; and, if you feel you can do so consistently, use your influence with your daughter in my behalf. I wish you good-morning.”



Walking rapidly away, — for the excitement under which he was laboring would not permit him to move slowly, — he had not gone a dozen rods before he saw the identical Mrs. Grant of the night before, together with Mrs. Fitzhammer, coming toward him. There was the least perceptible start upon seeing him, and then they moved quietly forward; but, as he passed them, the expression upon their faces spoke volumes.

“More food for scandal; more food for Christian charity. Good heavens, what a world we live in!” was his mental ejaculation, as he hastened forward.

“Just as I expected!” said Mrs. Grant. “You see, my dear Mrs. Fitzhammer, that people at a distance are beginning to find her out, and are more bold in visiting her than those here would dare to be.”

“For my part, I am ashamed to be seen so near the house,” lisped the lawyer’s wife. “He might think we were some of the same stamp, you know.”

“No danger; no danger of that in the least, Mrs. Fitzhammer. A respectable woman is never mistaken for one of her class.”

“I suppose you are right, Mrs. Grant; and yet I sometimes wonder how it is that they detect the difference so readily.”

“You dear, unsophisticated child, it is your perfect innocence that makes you feel so; but when you have lived as long in the world, and have had as much trouble, as I have, — which God grant you never may! — you will not then be so unsuspecting.”



## CHAPTER IV.

## FIRST FRUITS.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” — BIBLE.

“Society, like to a Romish Pope, may claim to be infallible; may sell unto its favored ones indulgences; may give them leave to sow ‘wild oats:’ but justice still brings home to such as sow, the ‘wild-oat’ harvest.” — L. W.



O with me, kind reader, to the village of Albright. The time is just one week after the occurrence of the incidents related in the last chapter; the place, one of the best residences in the village; and the lady of the house one of the “upper tens,” in her own estimation at least. She belongs to that class to whom Saxe refers in the following pointed and most truthful lines: —

“Where’er six chimney-stacks go up  
Contiguous to a steeple  
Are those who can’t associate  
With common country-people.”

The lamps are lighted. The parlor window is up, and the sound of voices comes floating out upon the evening air. The blind is partly open, and through it we catch a glimpse of a lady’s face. “The features are familiar: let us look closer. Ah, yes! the very same: Mrs. Fitzhammer, the lawyer’s wife. But what has brought her here?” Thus mused William Reid, as he



neared the house of his friend, Edward Granger, Esq. Classmates, and almost inseparable during their college days, still they had not met since the marriage of Granger; but, after his interview with Helen, Reid resolved to visit Albright. So, after finishing up the business which brought him to Lakeside, he made his way thither, and arrives there just at the hour in which we have introduced our reader to the place.

"I wonder what that lawyer's wife is doing here. Some mischief, I'll warrant," was his mental comment.

In the mean while, the conversation in the parlor becomes more animated.

"Yes, Cousin Ella, I like Lakeside very much: it is such a romantic place. I tell Mr. Fitzhammer that he could not have chosen a livelier home. By the way, I understand that Mr. Granger used to visit there; indeed, that he spent much of his time there for a year or so before his marriage."

"He did, Addie; but he has never since. I have tried to get him to take me to the place; but he always has some excuse."

"I would go, anyhow, if I was in your place, Cousin Ella."

"Of course I shall, now that you are there."

"But there are other reasons for going, besides my being there."

"What do you mean, Addie?"

"I think, that, if you were to go there, you would find the solution of Mr. Granger's moods."

"Mr. Granger's moods?"

"Yes: of those gloomy spells that make you so unhappy, poor child."



“Why, what have you learned, Addie?” Mrs. Granger’s expression had undergone an entire change; and one needed but to look at her to know that pride and cruelty lay concealed under the usual velvety softness of her manner, — concealed, but waiting the moment in which their fangs could be buried in the heart of the hapless victim.

“If you look like that, I don’t think I had better tell you,” whined Mrs. Fitzhammer.

“Don’t be a fool, Add!” thundered Mrs. Granger: “but tell me what you mean.”

“Well, since you will have it, I think the girl that your husband talks of in his sleep is a Helen Harlow of that place.”

“What reason have you for thinking so?”

“She has a boy who was born a few months after Mr. Granger’s last visit there, and no one knows who its father is.”

“Do the people there think it is Mr. Granger’s?”

“I could not learn as they did, Cousin Ella.”

“Oh! quit your cousining, and talk straight ahead. You have so much romance about you, one would think that you were made of novels. Was he known to wait upon her, or be in her company much?”

“I could not learn as he was; but you are so cross, you don’t deserve to be told any thing about it.”

“It’s just what brought you here, though. But I should like to know what reason you have for thinking the child to be Mr. Granger’s.”

“It looks like him.”

“Do others think so beside yourself?”

“When I spoke of it, they did.”



“ Oh ! fool, fool, that you are ! And this is your love for me, is it ? ”

“ If I had not loved you, Cousin Ella, I shouldn't have come out here on purpose to tell you this,” said Mrs. Fitzhammer, beginning to sob.

“ It's all right, your telling me, Addie ; but you might have been careful enough of the family reputation to have kept it from others.”

Mrs. Fitzhammer opened her eyes very wide. “ Why, Cousin Ella ! I did not suppose that you loved Mr. Granger well enough to be so careful of his reputation.”

“ Neither do I, you little fool. If there was no one but him concerned, I shouldn't care a farthing ; but he is my husband, and whatever affects him affects me. I know little, and care less, about love ; but I have some pride.”

“ It is your pride, then, that is wounded, when you hear him talk of another in his sleep ? O Ella ! I did not think that you were quite so heartless ! ”

“ And who cares what you think, so that you keep your opinion to yourself ? I tell you, Add, I am not troubled with any of your romantic nonsense ; and I supposed that you knew it long ago.”

“ Why did you marry Mr. Granger, if you did not love him, Ella ? ”

“ Well, really, you have said Ella twice without prefixing the ‘ Cousin.’ What did I marry him for ? Because he was the best match in all the country, — distinguished-looking, a fine fortune, and an unblemished character. He could have married any one he chose ; and do you count it nothing that I can look the world in the face and say he chose me ? ”



“ Even if it is whispered that his father chose you, and he acquiesced rather than lose his fortune ? ”

“ Envy would be certain to say that. But let them say it where I can hear it, if they dare.”

Mrs. Fitzhammer sat for a while in silence. Two characters could hardly be more different than she and Mrs. Granger, — the one cold, calculating in the extreme, despising the sentimental in any form ; and the other all sentiment, but of the sickly kind that would vent itself in tears over fancied wrongs, — would seek for *respectable* broken hearts, only that it might feast its morbid appetite with expressions of sympathy ; but for broken hearts that had been pushed from the *respectable highway*, there was not even a sigh of regret.

Mrs. Granger, in a fit of spite, had spoken of her husband's gloomy moods, and his talking in his sleep : in a fit of spite, she had spoken of these things to her Cousin Adeline, or Addie as she was most frequently called. But she had an object to accomplish ; and it was for the purpose of securing Addie's co-operation that she had done so, and not, as Addie had supposed, the expression of a breaking heart. Granger was right when he said of his intended, “ Heart she has none.”

“ When do you return to Lakeside ? ” asked Mrs. Granger at length.

“ Why, are you tired of me ? ” said Mrs. Fitzhammer, starting from her reverie.

“ Can't you use a grain of common sense for once, you little goose ? Tired of you, indeed ! not so long as you do nothing to disgrace yourself or me. I wish to know, however, when you return ; for I must go with



you, and undo the mischief that your silly tongue has done."

"Mischief!"

"Yes, mischief. I do not intend that my husband's name shall be used in connection with any woman's but my own. I have no ambition in the direction of being looked upon as an abused wife. Bah! Do you suppose that I want all the trash in the country, every washer-woman and every kitchen-wench, looking after me with glances of pity as I pass along the street, and saying to themselves or to each other, 'Poor Mrs. Granger!?' Not I, indeed!"

"But what will you do?"

"What will I do? I can tell better when I get there; but you may rest assured that I shall do away with the impression that my husband is the father of that girl's child."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Fitzhammer. "Mr. Granger is coming, and a gentleman with him."

The next moment the door was thrown open, and the two gentlemen appeared upon the threshold; Mr. Granger introducing his friend and classmate, Mr. Reid, son of the Hon. R. S. Reid of Oakville, N.H. Compliments were interchanged, the beauties of the evening noted and commented upon; and then, but for Mrs. Granger, conversation would have lagged, for there was evidently a feeling of restraint upon the others.

Granger looked flushed and uneasy; for he had caught his wife's words, "That my husband is the father of that girl's child," and knew but too well that his secret was out, and he at the mercy of her two-edged tongue. Reid knew that the presence of the



lawyer's wife boded no good ; while she, recognizing him as the gentleman she had seen coming out of Mrs. Harlow's, was aching for the opportunity of pouring this item of interest into her cousin's ear. Mrs. Granger was the only one who seemed really at ease : but this only made her husband the more uneasy ; for he understood but too well, that, though a cat's claws may be sheathed in velvet, it does not take long to unsheathe them.

“ You reside in Lakeside, Mrs. Fitzhammer, I believe ? ” said Reid to that lady.

“ My husband and myself have recently taken up our residence there,” was the reply.

Mrs. Granger's face showed a smiling contempt for her cousin's affectation ; while Reid continued, “ I thought I recognized your face.”

“ I think you are the gentleman I saw coming out of Mrs. Harlow's one day,” she answered ; forgetting, in her anxiety to give Mrs. Granger this piece of news, that she was too modest to speak of such characters in the presence of gentlemen. But she did not forget it long, and the next moment her face was suffused with blushes.

“ Yes,” replied Reid : “ I thought you were one of the ladies that I met just after leaving there.” This calm reply only increased her confusion ; and, making some trifling excuse, she hastily left the room.

Granger felt as if he was sitting upon thorns, but tried to hide it, and hoped that he was succeeding ; but the keen eye of his wife had noted all. “ Friends of yours, Mr. Reid ? ” she asked, with the most innocent look imaginable.

“ Slight acquaintances only,” was the response.



“ Ah, indeed ! I did not know but they might be relatives ; and, if so, I thought I should like to call on them, as I am going to Lakeside next week.”

The word consternation would give but a faint idea of the expression upon Granger's face as his wife made this announcement. “ You see, my dear,” she said, turning toward him with a smile, “ Mrs. Fitzhammer has no relatives but our family in this part of the country : and she is so anxious that I should go home with her, that I have promised to do so, as I knew you would not object ; you never do when you see that I really desire a thing.”

Granger writhed inwardly, but responded with an attempted smile. “ Have you one of your old headaches, Mr. Granger ? ” she asked a moment after : “ you are not looking well.”

“ I am not feeling quite well,” he replied, glad of any excuse that would avail for the moment ; for, though unsolaced by love, he, too, had pride, and he shrank from having Reid know how utterly wretched he was. And as to not being well, he had spoken the truth ; for the presence of Reid, in connection with Mrs. Harlow's name, — these had brought up so vividly the scenes of the past, that, when he compared what might have been with what was, he was actually sick and faint.

Conscience, too, was busy at work, showing him Helen as he first beheld her ; telling of the motives which prompted him to seek her society ; how he had avoided being seen with her in public, cheating her innocent heart by saying that their love was too sacred to be shared by any one but themselves till the time came that he could make her his wife.



He remembered, too, how her artless loveliness had won upon him, till he was resolved to possess her at all events, honorably if he could not accomplish it dishonorably; and then that final interview, where she had borne herself so bravely upon learning the deception that had been practiced upon her, — of the years in which she had rested under the scorn of an unpitying world, with none to shield the brave young head from the storm, and still no word of complaint, not even the name of her betrayer, passing her lips.

All this, and much more, came up so vividly before him, that, ere he was aware, he groaned aloud. Reid, as well as Mrs. Granger, was well aware that the plea of sickness was only an excuse: but, acting upon it, they had left him to himself, while they entertained each other; for Mrs. Fitzhammer's modesty had not sufficiently recovered from the shock it had received to permit her to return.

But now Mrs. Granger sprang to her feet, with, "My dear husband, you are really suffering."

"A sharp pain in my head. It took me unawares, it was so sudden; but it is gone now," said Granger with a pallid smile. He should have said heart instead of head, and then he would have told the truth.

"But sha'n't I get you something to take?" continued Mrs. Granger, with such a look of sympathy upon her face, that none but the closest observer could have suspected that she was other than the loving, devoted wife she appeared.

"No: I don't need any thing, unless it is a turn in the air. Reid, would you not like to take a walk?"

"Certainly, if Mrs. Granger will excuse us."



"I shall not give my consent to his going, unless you go along to take care of him, Mr. Reid; for I fear he is much worse than he is willing to own," was that lady's smiling reply.

Reid bowed. "I shall take good care of him, for your sake, madam;" and the next moment they were in the street.

"And so you have seen Helen?" said Granger, as soon as they were beyond hearing distance from the house.

"I have," was the reply.

"How does she seem?"

"As brave as ever."

"And her child?"

"A splendid boy, that any mother might be proud of. Has Mrs. Granger borne you no children?"

"We have one,—a boy of nearly two years of age. You shall see him in the morning." And, after a silence of a few seconds, he added, "You can marry Helen now, Will, if you wish."

"Do you wish I would, Ed?"

"Yes, I do; for she is worthy of you, and I should feel better than I now do if that load of disgrace was lifted from her shoulders."

"Well, I intend to marry her if she will have me."

"If she will have you?"

"Yes; but I have my doubts about it." Granger stared incredulously. "I see," said Reid: "you have not been cured of the idea, that, if a woman is wronged by one man, she will be only too glad to marry another, simply for the protection of his name."

"I should suppose that that would naturally have some



influence. And it is not every poor girl, disgraced or not, that could marry a man like yourself, Will; and, if she refuses you, I shall feel that she don't deserve much pity."

"Not pity, but respect, Ed, — respect for being true to herself. If I thought her capable of being influenced by the motives you mention, I should not want her for a wife."

"So you think that a girl in Helen's position has a right to look just as high as though nothing of the kind had ever occurred?"

"I think she had better live single than to marry one she cannot love, no matter what his position in life. I should suppose that your own experience would teach you that."

"What do you mean, Will?" said Granger, coloring.

"I mean that you have cheapened yourself in marrying as you did; that the woman you have is no companion for you, nor worthy to be compared with Helen Harlow."

"Take care, there, Will: remember that it is my wife of whom you are talking."

"Legally true, morally false. There is not a particle of love between you, and you know it. Her expressions of sympathy are hypocritical, — only put on to deceive the world. No: she does not love you; but she exults in the fact that you are hers, is proud of it. She is perfectly aware, however, that you have no more love for her than she has for you; and, when you are by yourselves, she delights in torturing you. Helen is far happier now than you are, Ed."



During this speech, there was a conflict of varied emotions going on in the breast of Granger. His pride revolted against the thought of his friend's knowing how wretched he really was: he was angry, also, at his plainness of speech, and, at the same time, fully aware that it would be useless to make even an attempt at denial. He spoke quietly, but with a dry, hard intonation of voice.

“I think you must have spent your time since I saw you in studying the philosophy of charity, you make such sweeping assertions. Had not you and Helen better establish a school for the express purpose of teaching your Utopian morality?”

“There is no use in being offended, Ed, because I have told you the truth. God knows, I wish it were otherwise; for I love you well enough to desire for you any amount of happiness. I have studied this subject a great deal in the last three years; and I have talked about it too. There is a lady living near my father's, who was left in her girlhood in the same condition that Helen is. The thought of the disgrace was more than she could endure; and, to avoid it, she married another man, — one who had long wanted her, but who was every way beneath her. She married him before her child was born; and, moving into a new place, she supposed that she had mended a bad matter nicely.

“She says now, that that marriage was the worst, the most criminal act that she ever did. ‘I am now,’ she says, ‘the mother of one child by a man I loved, and of three by a man I do not love. The world accepts me now because I am a wife: it rejected me then because I was a mother and not a wife, the while I was purity itself compared to what I am now.’



“ ‘But suppose,’ I asked, ‘that society should take you at your own estimate, — should accept those who have suffered themselves to be placed in the situation in which you were: would it not tend to increase the evil?’

“ ‘If society would punish our betrayers as heavily as it does us, it would tend to decrease it,’ was her indignant answer.”

“Your conversation would indicate that you possessed her confidence, to say the least,” said Granger, in the same dry, hard tone.

“Perhaps you will not think that so strange when I tell you that she was a seamstress in my father’s house, and my eldest brother the father of her child.”

“She ought to have known better than to have listened to one so far above her socially,” was the reply.

“And he ought to have been too honorable to *trifle* with any one, to say nothing of the persistency with which he pursued that poor girl. She could not well afford to lose her place, and so she did not complain of him, thinking that she could protect herself. She fastened the door of her sleeping-apartment, and he crept in at the window.” \*

“And what became of that immaculate brother of yours?”

Reid, at this question, burst into a hearty laugh. “Oh! he has repented, and is now the ‘Rev. Mr. Reid’ of W——, Vermont.”

“Well, this is all very interesting to me, of course. When one has done a foolish thing, it is so very pleasant to be told of it, to be sure!”

“Forgive me, Ed, if I have been too hard on you.

\* A fact.



I am aware that we are wronged as well as wronging when we fall into such sin. In fact, society, by the manner in which it looks over, ignores such conduct in man, practically educates him to it."

"That's a truth, God knows," said Granger bitterly.

"And things will never be any better, Ed, till every wronged woman *asserts herself, takes just the position that Helen Harlow has done.*"

"Perhaps not. But what do you suppose my — Mrs. Granger means by going to Lakeside?"

"I think that Mrs. Fitzhammer has been putting mischief into her head."

"Mrs. Fitznoodle! for noodle she certainly is; and I should think it would give any one fits to live with her."

"I don't think she is overstocked with sense, Ed."

"Sense! no. I can't see how a man of sense could have married her. Still, I have no right to say any thing, after having shown such superlative good sense in my own matrimonial affairs."

"Too late to regret it now," said Reid.

"Yes; and that is what makes it so much the more bitter. But why do you think that noodle has been plotting mischief?"

Reid now told of his adventure the first night he spent at Lakeside, — the conversation about Helen, and the turn it had taken when Miss Shaw and Mrs. Fitzhammer joined the others.

Granger looked surprised. "It is an old saying, that 'murder will out;' but I did not suppose that I was letting it out in my sleep," he said at length.

"And I sometimes think that Nature sickens at crime, and vomits it up," added Reid.



Granger laughed at the oddness of Reid's remark. "You will never be accused of stealing another's thought there, Will; for, if that is not an original idea, I don't know where you will look for one. But suppose we return to the house. The ladies will think that we are not very much in love with their society."

"And they might make a worse mistake," laughed Reid, as they turned their steps in that direction.

Mrs. Fitzhammer had so far recovered from the shock she had received as to return to the parlor; but for a time she manifested a school-girl's timidity, gradually coming out of it into her usual state of sentimental self-possession. Music was called for; after which the conversation turned upon the various nothings so much in vogue, and, of course, became general, and continued till the hour of retiring.

Granger seemed inclined to put it off as long as possible; but, like the day of doom, it would come.

It is useless for me to attempt even to portray the kind of conjugal endearments which awaited him; but I am very certain that the contrast with what it would have been had Helen been his wife was very palpable to the understanding of him who was reaping as he had sown, — reaping the first fruits of a harvest to which he could see no end this side the grave, if then.





## CHAPTER V.

## ALONE.

"I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me." — BIBLE.

"No room, no room,  
For two to meet the genius of their fate:  
Nor down the pathway to the narrow tomb,  
Nor on the golden heights of victory.  
Alone, alone I bear my cross;  
Alone the weight of glory coming after." — BURLEIGH.



THE time appointed, Reid returned to Lakeside, for the purpose of learning Helen's decision. Upon reaching the place, he was surprised to find the house closed, and no signs of life about. After rapping again, and yet again, and eliciting no response, he tried the door; and, finding that it was not fastened, he opened it and looked in.

The sight that met his eyes was not only unexpected, but startling. Helen was kneeling beside her mother's corpse, her face buried in her hands, and seemingly unconscious of all around her.

"Helen! Miss Harlow! What does this mean?"

She looked at him a moment, as if hardly comprehending where she was; and then, rising to her feet, she silently pointed to the motionless form before her.



“But why are you here alone?” he asked.

“And why should I not be alone?” was the bitter response. “Why should I not be despised and rejected by a Christian community? I, when but a child in years, to say nothing of experience,—I was fool enough to love and trust; and, for this crime, why should I not be an outcast?”

Reid lifted his hand deprecatingly, as he glanced involuntarily toward the dead.

“Yes, but I will speak!” Helen burst forth with still greater vehemence. “I have been silent for years; I have smothered the bitter feelings that the thought of my wrongs was sure to bring,—have kept them in when they raged like a pent-up volcano: and all for her dear sake. But she is beyond the reach of such things now; she is at rest: and I—I” — The pressure upon her overtaxed brain was too great: she reeled, and, but for Reid’s quickly clasping arms, would have fallen prostrate.

She had not entirely lost consciousness, or, if so, only for a moment; and there was a faint struggle to free herself as he bore her to the lounge.

“Be quiet, dear one,” he whispered; for the place seemed to him too sacredly solemn for the loud-spoken word. “Be quiet; for, so long as my arm is strong enough to protect, you shall suffer thus no more.”

And was it a sin, weak and grief-stricken as she was, that her head rested upon his shoulder for a little, with a sense of perfect peace? Was it strange that her life-purpose passed from her sight for one brief instant? She had otherwise been more than mortal. But it was only for a moment; and then the “No, no!”



that burst from her lips as she struggled to a sitting posture was interrupted with, —

“Quite a scene, I should think; but it would have been more in keeping with decency if you had kept the door closed.” And, turning quickly, they confronted Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Granger.

“There is nothing done here that needs to have the door closed upon it,” said Reid sternly. “When I find a woman alone with her mother’s corpse, and she, to her, very strange tones of sympathy bring so vividly to her mind the bitter wrongs she has endured that she faints away, I think I have a right to take care of her till she regains her consciousness.” He said this very deliberately, but in a tone that was not soon forgotten by his hearers.

Mrs. Grant was startled at the word “corpse;” for, as we have already seen, she was a coward. She opened her lips as if to question; when her eye caught sight of the pale, still form, and she remained silent. Not so Mrs. Granger; for the fact that Mrs. Harlow was dead gave her only satisfaction: she could now the more easily crush the heroic girl before her; and so, with a sneer upon her lips, she replied, —

“Of course, such as she can always receive sympathy from *gentlemen*, even while an honest wife is forgotten. But where is *Miss Harlow’s* boy? She can not be alone, with him to smile upon her.”

Reid pointed to the door. “Go, madam, before I forget that you are a woman! Dare not longer to insult with your presence one who is as much purer than yourself as the heavens are higher than the earth.”

Mrs. Grant lifted her hands in astonishment; while



Mrs. Granger's evil eyes threatened vengeance. "Come," said she to her companion: "we have demeaned ourselves too much already."

"But who is to take care of the corpse?" asked Mrs. Grant.

"Not her murderers, I can assure you," said Helen, speaking for the first time since their entrance.

Reid looked at her inquiringly.

"Just as truly as though they had stabbed her to the heart with a knife; but I can not tell you about it now."

"Of course not. We will first see these dear remains in their last resting-place. You are not afraid to stay here while I go to the village, and send some one to do what is needed to be done?"

"Certainly not: it is the living that I shrink from. I must have some one, of course; but still, no other hand shall do what I can do myself. I know," she continued, "that people will misunderstand me, will call me heartless, unfeeling, &c.; but it matters not, it matters not;" and her voice was full of unshed tears.

"But we must make arrangements for the funeral."

"Yes, I know, — I know we must," and, as the thought of losing sight of that dear form for ever rushed over her, she again threw herself upon her knees beside the couch, and burst into a passion of weeping.

Reid waited till she was somewhat quiet, and then continued, "Where shall we have the funeral, — here, or at church?"

"Here: I can not go to the church to be gaped at



by those who will look upon my grief as a dispensation of Providence to punish me for my wickedness."

"They certainly can not look upon it in that light, as death is the common lot of all."

"Yes: but when a *Christian* is afflicted, it is because God loves him; and when a *sinner* suffers in the same way, it is looked upon as evidence of God's anger, as he is said to be angry with the wicked every day."

"I should think, then, that he would be angry enough with some who call themselves Christians, if deeds instead of professions are the criterion. But what minister will you have?"

"None; or, at least, no one at Lakeside: for if, while professing to be the servants of Him who said, 'Neither do I condemn thee,' they could not call upon me during all these years of sorrow, they shall not come now."

"I have a friend at Glencove, that, with your permission, I will send for, — an old classmate of mine, and a Christian in deed as well as in name."

"Any one you please, so that they do not come from Lakeside."

After a few more questions in regard to the minutiae of the arrangements necessary, Reid repaired to the village; and dispatching black Susan, together with an honest German and his wife, to the aid of Helen, he then took a team from the livery-stable, and went, instead of sending to Glencove, some eight miles distant, for his friend, the Rev. Mr. Gordon.

Helen, after he had gone, went quietly at work preparing the body for its last robing: and only once during the time did she falter; and that was when little



Charlie, awaking from the usual daily sleep of healthy childhood, cried because "gran'ma wouldn't speak to him, nor kiss him."

It was not long after it was known at the village that Mrs. Harlow was dead, before the house was full of those who came to offer their services: for, notwithstanding the course they had taken since the birth of Helen's boy, Mrs. Harlow really had many friends; and they would gladly have *patronized* Helen as a *repentant sinner*, for they did not mean to be cruel, — oh, no! they had no such intention as that. But when she refused both to kneel to them, or to God in their presence, they verily thought they were doing God service in persecuting her.

And so they came and filled the house. Helen received them all quietly, but Miss Shaw, Mrs. Fitzhammer, Mrs. Granger, and Mrs. Grant; for, notwithstanding the rebuff they had received, these last came with the others. These four were told to leave, and in such a manner that they did not think it best to disobey. The others looked surprised; and Helen, noting it, remarked, "If you knew all, you would not blame me."

About nine o'clock in the evening, Reid returned, bringing with him the Rev. Mr. Gordon and his most excellent wife. Mr. Gordon was a classmate of Edward Granger's, as well as of Mr. Reid's; and to him and his worthy wife had the latter confided what he knew of Helen's history.

Coming thus prepared to sympathize with the bereaved girl, their presence, like to oil upon troubled waters, calmed her perturbed spirit by allaying much



of the bitterness which she was nourishing to the destruction of her own peace ; for she had not as yet learned that the only weapon which can take the keen edge from a bitter wrong is, " Father, forgive them, for *they know not what they do.*"

The funeral passed off quietly ; but the lesson of the hour was not soon forgotten. The words of the text were, " Man looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh at the heart."

In speaking from these words, he made them the occasion both of reproof and excuse,—reproof, not directly, of course, but in such a manner that each could not fail to apply it where it belonged : reproof to the people for judging, without the charity which puts the best instead of the worst interpretation upon an act ; and to Helen for the pride, which, under a sense of wrong, had caused her to shut herself up without explanation of any kind, leaving them to think what they pleased, simply because, judging from outward appearances, they had pleased to think wrong.

Then, taking the opposite side, he apologized for the people, from the fact, that, not being able to see the intention, they naturally judged from appearances ; and for Helen, by saying that a proud, sensitive nature, conscious of being wronged, and of being judged unjustly, was very apt to shut itself in, and bear all in silence.

Helen listened, and profited by the lesson. She saw that wisdom, as well as determination, was needed in the accomplishment of any object, no matter how worthy ; that martyrs for the right often fail just here. The audience, the while, found their prejudices giving



way, and sympathy for the poor girl, now so utterly alone, taking the place of condemnation.

Helen felt this, and, but for one thought, could have been comforted thereby ; and that thought was, “ This comes from the fact that two respectable men publicly treat me with respect.” Her feeling was, that woman should be respected for her own sake, and not because of man’s protection.

She expressed something of this in conversation with Mr. Gordon afterward. “ It is Nature,” said he ; “ and you can’t set aside her laws.”

“ Nature ? ” queried Helen.

“ Yes. God has ordained that man should receive recognition through woman, as well as woman through man. Would you be seen in public with a man that every other woman repudiated ? ”

“ I would, if satisfied that he was unjustly repudiated,” was the reply.

“ You might, I acknowledge, Miss Harlow. With your strong sense of justice, you could not very well help expressing your sympathy in some shape : but the masses can not do this, only as masses ; otherwise there would be no occasion for the heroic bravery of individuals in this direction.”

“ But what of the teachers, Mr. Gordon ? ”

“ They are borne upon the shoulders of these masses, — nine out of every ten. It is but few of our teachers who are leaders. And these can only direct the onward tide : they can neither check nor turn it back, even though thousands are crushed by its resistless flow.”

“ How, then, can prostrate ones escape ? ” she asked.

“ Only by getting up and moving on, or getting out



of the way, — the self-assertion that determines to conquer or die.”

“Just the position I have taken, Mr. Gordon ; and yet you blame me for being dissatisfied because ” —

“Because that recognition comes through the legitimate channel, and you can not see it so. No, my child : I am not blaming you, but simply pointing out your mistake. You would have that recognition to come from the masses direct : I wish you to understand that this can not be.”

“Do not press her too hard, my husband,” said Mrs. Gordon, smiling. “Give her time to weigh these questions in the balance of matured thought, and she will have no trouble in reaching correct conclusions.”

“Which will, of course, be your conclusions,” said Helen, with a spark of her natural vivacity.

This was upon the morning after the funeral, as Mr. and Mrs. Gordon had remained with Helen both nights, much to the surprise as well as the chagrin of the ministry of Lakeside. But they were not of those who are “borne upon the shoulders of the masses : ” they thought for themselves, and acted accordingly.

Before they were ready to leave, Reid came up from the village, and, calling Mr. Gordon aside, held a few moments' private conversation ; and Helen, as they separated, heard Mr. Gordon say, “I shall remain in Lakeside till to-morrow, and shall be most happy to serve you if occasion requires.”

As they drove away, Reid stood and watched them till they were out of sight, and then entered the house. Black Susan was busy in the kitchen, while Helen sat holding her boy upon her knee. In her eye there



was a look of suppressed feeling, and around the firmly-closed mouth the indications of a fixedness of purpose that augured ill for his hopes. She was aware of his intention, but felt that she could not give her decision then; so, without giving him a chance to speak, she said, —

“I will tell you now, Mr. Reid, what I meant by calling those two women my mother’s murderers. They were not alone, however; for there were two others, — Miss Shaw and Mrs. Fitzhammer.”

Reid uttered an involuntary “Ah!” while Helen proceeded. “About two weeks after you were here, I was surprised at receiving a call from Mrs. Fitzhammer and another woman, who was introduced as Mrs. Granger from Albright, — particularly emphasizing the last words.

“The eyes of the stranger were fixed upon me the while, with a look of covert insolence that made my blood boil. I noticed that mother started, and placed her hand upon her side, as she heard the name.

“‘What is the matter, mother?’ I asked.

“‘Only a sudden pain in my side; but it is gone now,’ she answered: but I noticed an unusual pallor around the mouth and eyes, while her cheeks were flushed.

“In the mean time, Mrs. Fitzhammer had been trying to coax Charlie to her. He refused to go, and seemed afraid; so much so, that I took him upon my lap to quiet him. The woman from Albright had been devouring him with her eyes; and she now broke out with, ‘What nonsense, Add, for you to think that that child looks like my husband!’ Here mother rose to her feet; and, but for a look from me, I believe she would have turned them out of the house.



“But I was desirous of hearing what they would say, and so I motioned her to be silent.

“‘I knew,’ continued the woman, ‘that it could not be: he is too honorable a man for that. He wouldn’t do such a thing as to deceive and betray one girl, when he was engaged to another.’”

“Indeed!” was Reid’s sarcastic response; his feelings being too intensely stirred to permit entire silence.

“‘I am sorry, Cousin Ella, to have wronged him, even in thought; and hope you will forgive me. I should not have thought of it, had not my attention been turned in that direction,’ said Mrs. Fitzhammer.

“‘Certainly, certainly, Addie: we are all liable to mistakes. But I will tell you who he is the very image of; and, if this girl will own the truth, she will say that I am right. You recollect that writing-master who came to Albright between three and four years ago,—about four, I think? He was smart, handsome, and just the one to flatter one who knew nothing of the ways of the world.

“‘He made love to several of the ladies of Albright, but did not succeed in deceiving them. He came, I am told, to Lakeside, and from here to Denton. At this last place, he courted one of the first young ladies in town; and every thing was ready for the wedding, when the officers came and took him away, saying that he had broken jail somewhere down in New Hampshire, and he was really a desperate character.’

“‘The good-for-nothing fellow!’ said Mrs. Fitzhammer. ‘He ought to be in prison; or any other man who will deceive a poor girl in this way.’

“I had heard enough; so I said to them, ‘Ladies,



it will be just as agreeable to me if you will discuss my affairs elsewhere.'

"Mother could no longer be restrained. I never saw her so excited. 'What you say is false, and you know it!' she exclaimed. 'You came here on purpose to insult us: your expressions of sympathy are as false as your own hollow hearts, and may' —

"'Mother! don't, don't say any thing that you will be sorry for,' I interposed.

"By this time, the *intruders* (Reid smiled to see how studiously she avoided calling them *ladies*) were beyond hearing; for the vehemence of mother's look and manner so startled them, that they moved with no laggard steps."

"The woman from Albright came here at Mrs. Fitzhammer's instigation," remarked Reid.

"*The woman from Albright*!" How Helen thanked him in her heart for the sympathy thus indicated.

She looked at him inquiringly. He hesitated a moment, and then said, "You recollect the time, when, from your retreat in the rocks, you burst in upon us so unceremoniously? Well, we were so much startled by what you said, that we took no notice of your hiding-place; but, on my return to Lakeside, I had a curiosity to examine it. I did so; then sat down to ponder, and got caught there, — not exactly caught, either; for I was not discovered: but those who sat there, and slandered and planned, and planned and slandered, little imagined that they had an unseen auditor."

"So you played eavesdropper, did you?" laughed Helen.

"Not intentionally, but most effectually; for I not



only learned that you had been absent and had returned, but that they intended to drive you away. Mrs. Fitzhammer, or Fitznoodle as Granger calls her," — he glanced furtively at her as he pronounced that name, and was sorry to see a spasmodic contraction of the muscles about the mouth, as if from sudden pain ("She loves him still! I fear there is little hope for me," was his inward comment); but he continued, — "had heard your name from her Cousin Ella; and she had gathered it from Granger, as he muttered it in his sleep.

"The woman had no idea as to who you were, or where you lived; but when Noodle, here, came to Lakeside, and heard you spoken of, she concluded that you were the same, and, putting this and that together, drew her own conclusions as to the parentage of your child. Of course, with such a precious morsel of gossip, she had to go to Albright as quickly as she could get there.

"Ella Ward was a proud girl: she is proud still, — so proud that she would stop at nothing. I hardly think murder itself would deter her, if she could thus avert threatened disgrace from any one connected with her; that is, could she so plan it as to escape detection. As to love, I doubt if she knows what it is; but she is as cruel as she is proud, and as deceitful as cruel, — a perfect snake in the grass, unless she has one fast, and then she does not hesitate to show her colors."

Helen listened more for another than for herself; that is, wronged and disgraced as she was, the prevailing feeling in her woman's heart was pity for the man who called such a woman wife.

Reid noted each expression of her face, and read them



aright too ; but he continued : “ I fear, Helen, that she will do you some serious injury yet.”

“ She has done so already : she has killed my mother.” She paused a little, in order to gain more self-control, and then resumed the narration which had been interrupted by Reid’s remarks.

“ I used every means in my power to soothe mother’s excited feelings. I had noticed, since my return from Maine, that she was not as strong as usual ; and I feared that she would be sick in consequence. She calmed down after a little, or, at least, she seemed calm : but I now know that it was only the seeming ; for before night she was in a high fever, and with so much pain in her head, that, for several hours, she was delirious.

“ Toward morning she became quiet, and slept some ; but it was several days before she so far recovered as to seem like herself. In the mean time, I had found a note under the door, one morning, directed to me, and demanding that I should leave the place. I kept this from mother, of course. Three mornings afterward, I found another of the same purport, only more threatening. I think mother must have found something of the kind, too, from the way she looked and acted.

“ In just three days more, I found another. I am quite certain that mother saw me pick that up, though she said nothing. All that day she had a sort of helpless, bewildered look, — like to one who has struggled and given up. It was pitiful, and I could hardly bear it ; still, I did not let her know that I noticed it.

“ This last note stated, that, if there were not some signs of leaving by such a time, there would be measures taken to make me go. That night I saw all four of the



women I have named prowling around the house. They staid perhaps an hour, but left without any offensive demonstrations. The next day, mother seemed much better: still, I trembled all the time, — not for myself, but for her; for I knew that there was mischief plotting.

“The time came named in the note. The day passed off as usual; but, just after midnight, there came a loud rap upon the door, when the woman from Albright — I knew her by her voice — called out, ‘Wait a moment: we haven’t the tar and feathers quite ready.’”

“My God!” exclaimed Reid: “I wish I had been here!”

“Mother screamed and fainted; came to, and fainted again. I had all I could do to keep her from going into convulsions. This lasted for an hour, I should think. There had been no further disturbance during the time; but, just as I had succeeded in quieting her somewhat, there came a heavy stone against the door, and another crashing through the window.

“This was the night but one before you returned. There were no further signs of hostility; but, from that hour, mother sank rapidly. I did not summon a physician, for I felt that it would be of no use; and, further, why should she stay here to suffer? I know that she is at rest now; and it is easier to bear my load alone than to feel that she is grieving over me all the time.”

And then, as if utterly broken down with a sense of her desolation, she bowed her head upon her boy’s bright curls, and wailed, “O mother, mother!”

“Not alone, dear one, if you will only give me the right to protect you,” said Reid tenderly.

“Don’t! oh, don’t!” she fairly shrieked. “I have



vowed ; and I can not go back, I will not go back ! I must stand alone, and vindicate the sex that would crush me, — must show them that a woman is not ruined because she has trusted and been deceived.”

“Helen ! Miss Harlow ! listen to me.”

“No, I will not listen to you. I listened to one man, to my everlasting sorrow.”

Reid was silent ; while Helen was shaken like a leaf in the wind with the tempest of her grief.

“Pardon me,” said she, after the storm of feeling had somewhat subsided : “I did not intend to be unjust ; but it can not be.”

“You are unjust to yourself,” he said.

“I should be, if I should listen to you, — both to you and to myself. I respect you more than any other man living ; but my heart is dead within me. I have no love for any one ; and I can conceive of no greater wrong to man, or woman either, than marriage without love.”

“I will take the responsibility of bringing your dead heart to life with the warmth of my love, if you will only give me the opportunity.”

“But I dare not take the responsibility of giving you the opportunity. Not loving you, it would be unjust to you ; and, if I did love you, I certainly could not lay such a burden upon you.”

“But what will you do here all alone ? ”

“I have not had time to decide yet, but shall be able to form some plan in a few days. I do not think my persecutors will trouble me any more just yet : and to marry now, even if there were no other objection, I would not ; for it would look as though I did it simply for protection.”



“ O Helen, Helen ! how proud you are ! ”

“ It may be pride, though I had not looked upon it in that light.”

“ It certainly is pride, — pride that stands in the way both of your happiness and mine.”

“ Not of mine, Mr. Reid ; for, from henceforth, there is no happiness for me but in carrying out my purpose, — that of educating my boy, and forcing the world to respect both him and his mother.”

“ And when your own nobleness has won to you one who would so gladly aid you in carrying out your purpose, you will not accept what you have won.”

“ To do as you wish would defeat my purpose ; for it is *alone*, and not under the shadow of a man's name, that I must do this. No, it is of no use : I must bear my burden ALONE.”





## CHAPTER VI.

## A WOMAN'S HATE.

"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned."



CONSIDERING the relative positions of Mrs. Granger and Helen, it would seem strange to apply the above to the former ; for Helen, to all appearance, was the one scorned. But really it was not so ; and Mrs. Granger knew it. She knew in her soul that her husband had more respect, more love, for Helen Harlow than for any other woman living.

She cared not for his love, only so far as appearances were concerned ; but that he should love another aroused all the vindictiveness of her nature : and, further, that the public should see and note it, as she felt that it would, now that there had been a clew given, — an indication in that direction.

Mrs. Granger, though destitute of those traits of character which make woman lovely, make her worthy of the name, was still a very close reasoner. She knew, that, when once the trail was found, a more than bloodhound keenness was sure to follow it up ; and how she cursed the folly of the woman, who, thinking to serve her, had given that clew ! She went farther back than that : she cursed herself for the folly that



had led her even to mention aught of her domestic affairs to "the rattle-pate."

The woman fairly writhed as she thought of the comments that would be made among both high and low ; aggravating herself still more by dwelling upon them, putting them into words, and repeating them over and over : " There goes Granger's wife, — a mighty proud woman ! But they say her husband doesn't care much for her : they say he has a boy at Lakeside not much older than the one he has by his wife."

And again : " They say that Granger's boy at Lakeside is smarter and better looking than any he has at home ;" or, " I wonder if he does nothing toward the support of that child and his mother ?" or, " They say that he loves that girl now better than he does his wife." And again : " She is younger and better looking than his wife : he was a fool for not marrying her." " Oh ! you know that old Ward was rich, and this girl poor : and that makes all the difference in the world."

And thus the miserable woman tortured herself, till, becoming desperate, she resolved upon desperate means to put an end to such annoyances. Helen thought that she would be let alone for a while, — long enough to enable her to think and plan for the future ; but in this she was mistaken. True, so far as those who lived at Lakeside were concerned, there would have been no further trouble whatever ; for the death of Mrs. Harlow, together with the influence of Mr. Gordon in his excellent sermon, had so softened their feelings that they were willing to give her a chance to live, to say the least.

But with Mrs. Granger it was different. The more the feelings of the people were softened toward Helen,



the more bitter she became ; and, on the very night of all others when one would suppose that there could be no heart hard enough to disturb the doubly desolate girl, — the first night after the funeral upon which she had been alone with her child and Susan, — there were steps taken that would have sent her and her boy beyond the reach of earthly malice, had it not been for one of those unaccountable occurrences which so often frustrate the best-laid plans. Sleeping as soundly as they were, with the exhaustion which follows excitement of all kinds, and especially that of grief, but for this they would not have waked till too late.

Reid had seen Mrs. Granger in town just at dusk ; and there was something in her look that gave him an uneasy sensation, though, after the moment, he thought little of it. Still, he learned, afterward, that there had been inquiries made about nine o'clock in the evening, to learn if he was at the inn. He had retired early ; and the boy said that Mrs. Granger wished to see him before she returned to Albright, but that in the morning would do as well, if he would call before the stage went out.

About eleven o'clock, Reid was wakened out of a sound sleep very suddenly ; and with so strong a feeling of something wrong somewhere, that he found it impossible to sleep again. Under an influence for which he could not account, he arose, dressed, and walked out into the open air. Once out of doors, he involuntarily took the road leading toward Mrs. Harlow's, and had traversed more than half the distance before he was aware of the fact.

“What does this mean ?” he asked as he came to himself. “What a fool I am ! I'll go back and go to



bed again ;” and, as he supposed, suiting the action to the word, started back ; but, instead of doing so, he kept straight ahead, not knowing the difference till he came in sight of Helen’s house. Here he stopped again, cursed himself for the infatuation that seemed determined to take him there in spite of fate, and would really have turned back, had he not caught sight of a female form ahead of him, and a little to one side, stealing with cat-like tread through the bushes.

Every sense was now fully awake ; and, stepping quickly into the shadow of a large oak, he watched the movements of the figure ahead of him. She seemed to have caught a faint sound ; for she stopped, looked back, and appeared half inclined to go back, but finally went on. Having reached the house, she paused a while, listened intently, looked in every direction ; and, seeming satisfied that all was right, she proceeded to gather together some chips, shavings, and what other combustible material she could find. This done, she applied a match to the whole, watched till she saw that it was beginning to burn, and then turned to leave.

Reid, in the mean time, had been getting closer and closer, and was now so near, that, but for the fact that she had taken the precaution to cover her face, he could have recognized her. But this was not to avail her long ; for, as she turned, one strong hand grasped her arm, and another tore off the mask, and — Mrs. Granger stood revealed.

She paled to the hue of death ; but her self-possession did not forsake her, and the next instant the flash of steel was seen.

“ Devil ! ” exclaimed Reid, as he seized the uplifted



hand in time to arrest the blow. "Devil! what do you mean?"

"Fool! what do you mean?" she hissed between her set teeth. "What do you mean, coming here on a midnight assignation with a woman whose mother is hardly cold in the grave? Shame, shame!"

"The insinuation is worthy of one who comes here with arson and murder in her heart. Look there!" said he, crushing with his foot the fast-kindling blaze.

"Ha, ha, ha!" she laughed; "wouldn't it have been nice to have smoked you out, like rats from a hole? A good blaze here, and then a wet blanket to smother it, and shut in all the smoke, only what could have passed into the house through the cat and key holes."

Reid was dumb with amazement at such cool assurance; while she continued, "Oh! I wish I had only been a little quicker, and then had the whole town here to have witnessed the sport. I think the warmth of their charity would have abated somewhat, notwithstanding the Rev. Mr. Gordon's eloquence."

"What does this mean?" said Helen, coming to the door; for the noise had awakened her, and she had arisen to ascertain the cause.

"It means," said Mrs. Granger, "that you are caught, notwithstanding your slyness. A pretty time this to receive midnight visits from gentlemen! But for the fact that your mother was no better than yourself, she would rise from her grave to reproach you."

"And how came you here at this hour, madam?"

"I came to watch you, you shameless creature; and I have learned what I wished to know." Reid still held her by the arm, and Helen looked inquiringly at him.



He pointed to the smothered flame. "If I believed that spirits revisited the earth," said he, "I should certainly think that your mother had come from the grave to protect instead of reproaching you ; for I was wakened from my sleep, and brought here, by some power beyond myself."

Here Mrs. Granger gave a sudden wrench, and, thus freeing herself, started swiftly toward town. Reid followed, and was soon so far in advance as to turn and intercept her.

"What do you mean?" she demanded. "Do you wish to murder me?"

"It sounds well for you to talk of being murdered, madam, — don't it?"

"I don't know why else you should be following me."

"I demand to know what further wickedness you are intent upon ; and I swear to you, madam, that, if you dare to utter your accursed falsehoods further than you have already done, it will be the worse for you."

"Do you threaten me, sir? Recollect that I have a husband to protect me."

"And so has Miss Harlow one who will protect her with his life, if necessary, — one who would be only too glad to be her husband, if she would consent. And as to your husband, I should laugh to see you influencing him against her."

This last remark was more just than wise ; or so he thought when he saw its effect upon the desperate woman before him : but perhaps it was as well in the end.

She evidently felt its force, and, for several moments,



was nearly choking with rage. She waited, however, till she could speak calmly, and then said, —

“I see, Mr. Reid, what you wish. You think to frighten me into silence; but I am not to be influenced by fear. I have some regard, however, for my husband's feelings; and I should grieve to have him know what a wretch he has for a friend. On his account, I will promise to keep silence as long as you do.”

“Fiend!” said Reid, stepping aside, “fiend, go!”

She hurried forward, and he followed, determined not to lose sight of her till sure that she was where she could do no more mischief that night. After seeing her safe within doors, he watched till the morning broke, to be certain that she did not leave again; and then went back to his room, and slept till far into the forenoon. When he arose, the stage for Albright had been gone more than an hour. It was then that he learned of the message that had been left the night before, and knew that it was done on purpose to learn if he was there or with Helen.

“She will keep silence so long as I do!” said he; repeating Mrs. Granger's words of the night before. “She evidently fears me, though determined not to show it; and, consequently, will keep her promise. But I shall tell Granger all about this, that he may help to watch the fiend, and keep her from doing Helen harm. My God! I wish she would consent to marry me, and let me take her away from this accursed place.”

At first he felt inclined to make the whole story public. When he thought of the singular manner in which he came to be there, in connection with the prejudice against Helen, he knew that his story would



be questioned, to say the least. "I could not believe it, if I did not know it to be true," said he to himself. So, on the whole, he concluded to keep quiet, and watch for further developments.

He visited Helen again, however, talked the matter over, and renewed his offer of marriage.

She smiled in spite of herself. "Have you so mistaken me, Mr. Reid," said she, "as to suppose that a thing of this kind could influence or change my determination?"

"I might have known better," he replied; "for you are different from any woman I have ever met. But there is one thing you can not do: you can not prevent my watching over you; and rest assured that I shall make it the business of my life."

"While I can but appreciate the feeling, Mr. Reid, I must say that I think you could find a more worthy object to live for," was her tearful reply; for his devotion moved her more strongly than she was willing to acknowledge.





## CHAPTER VII.

## MORE REAPING.

"Darest thou to do the wrong? Then, when thou least art looking, shall the judgment of that wrong overtake thy lagging steps." — L. W.



RS. GRANGER went back to her home, and kept the silence she had promised; not because she wished, but because she could not speak the lie her heart conceived, without touching her idol, — family pride.

Helen sold her little home, and went into Lakeside to live; partly because she felt more safe there than so far away from others, and partly because she thought it best to bend a little to the prejudices of the people.

In the village, her incomings and outgoings would be open to all; and, further, she would necessarily be brought more into such contact as would tend to wear away the reserve which she had very naturally acquired from a constant sense of her position.

This reserve tended more to beget distrust than confidence; and, feeling the force of the remarks of the minister on the day of her mother's funeral, she resolved to break through it, — to do her part, at least, toward removing prejudice from the public mind.

Consequently, she opened a fancy-store, — no very



large establishment ; one that was simply calculated to meet the wants of a country village. But it was a business, which, while it did not call gentlemen about her, showed that she desired to win the confidence of her own sex. She next sat down and wrote a plain, straightforward letter addressed to the public, had about fifty copies printed, and gave them to the ladies of the place as she had opportunity.

In this letter she appealed to their better feelings as women ; told them that she had been misunderstood ; that her position in reference to the past was, that, so far as the sin, the moral obliquity, of the act was concerned, it did not truly belong to her.

“The weakness, the folly of trusting,” said she, “is mine, and I accept the suffering that it *naturally* brings ; for if you suppose for a moment, that, even with kindness and sympathy, to say nothing of the bitter scorn that is *unjustly* poured upon the head of foolishly trusting girlhood, — if you imagine, even without the scorn, that it is a pleasant thing to be a mother with no father’s hand to caress or father’s loving eyes to smile upon your darling, you are very much mistaken.

“Nay ; this heart-hunger is so keen as at times to make the sufferer almost indifferent to either smiles or frowns from other sources. No, no, friends : I meditated no wrong, for I meditated not at all. I only loved, nay, worshipped, an idol ; and how could I worship, and suppose that the worshipped one would counsel me wrong ? Therefore, I say, the folly, the weakness, of a child (I was but a child) were mine ; but the *sin* belongs to another, and I never will accept it.

“In that hour when I learned that my idol was false,



I woke to womanhood ; and, in the strength of that womanhood, I vowed that I would not sink, that I would rise, that the world should yet learn to do me justice. And now, — mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of Lakeside, — will you aid me, by your confidence and your patronage, to support myself and child honorably ? or will you turn away, thus planting thorns in my path ?

“ You ask, ‘ Why do I not give up the name of my betrayer to public scorn ? ’ It would do no good. *He* is a *man*, — a *strong, self-sustaining man* ; therefore the world would not reject *him*. He now has a wife ; and why make her unhappy ? No : leave him alone to the stings of his own conscience, and to the exactions of violated law. I am better off than he is. I have counseled no wrong, betrayed no trusting heart, broken no solemn vows ; and unless God’s justice is a farce, but another name for wrong, I repeat it, I am better off than he is.”

This, of course, was variously received ; but, on the whole, it did good. Mr. Reid’s business led him to the place frequently, and he always spoke of Helen in terms of the highest respect ; declaring boldly that she had refused him, together with the reasons why. Mr. Gordon and his wife, from Glencove, always called upon her whenever they came into the place ; and, altogether, the people began to think, that perhaps it wouldn’t hurt them to look at her goods. Helen had good taste ; and her selections were so well made, that, looking, they were pretty sure to purchase.

So, step by step, her rooms became quite a place of resort ; though, through all, she so carried herself, that those who approached her well understood that she re-



spected herself; that she made no concessions, nor asked none, on account of the past.

In the mean time, Reid had informed Granger of the steps taken by his wife when at Lakeside; and, between the two, they kept so good a watch upon her that she dared not make another move, for the time at least, though she watched and waited.

Some four years had passed since the death of Mrs. Harlow, when Granger was agreeably surprised by a visit from an uncle — his mother's only brother — from Maine. This uncle was none other than the Hon. Charles Edson, Helen's father; though of this fact Granger knew nothing.

Mrs. Granger was in her element. "Mr. Granger's uncle, the Hon. Mr. Edson from Maine," was the standing topic of conversation: friends were invited, and there was a grand time generally.

Mrs. Grant was about the only one in Lakeside who had not given up persecuting Helen. She said that when people were penitent, it was time enough to forgive them; it was all that was required of any one: and, for her part, she thought the way that even those who call themselves Christians were encouraging that girl was a warrant for sin; and she shouldn't be surprised if it came home to them some day, in the persons of their own daughters.

Feeling thus, she of course sympathized with Mrs. Granger, and whenever she came to Albright, which was twice or three times a year, was well received. Still, she was not exactly such a person as Mrs. Granger wished to introduce to her best company; consequently, she felt somewhat annoyed to have an extra



visit at this time. But it could not be helped ; so Mrs. Grant also had the high privilege of making the acquaintance of an honorable.

With her prying disposition, she was certain to recollect every circumstance that ministered to this propensity. She learned, before Mr. Edson came in, that he was from Ross Cove, Maine ; for Mrs. Granger, in an indirect way, was trying to prepare her for the ordeal by giving her to understand that the honorable gentleman was very dignified, — indeed, that she felt quite in awe of him herself : and, in doing this, she, of course, mentioned his place of residence.

Mrs. Grant recollected that it was the same place from which the letters came and were sent to, that had puzzled her so much ; so she resolved to find out something more about the matter. When Mr. Edson came in, she detected the resemblance between him and Helen immediately. Here was food for her curiosity ; and she was sure to follow up the line that was thus put into her possession.

“ Mr. Edson,” said she, as soon as she could with half a show of decency approach the subject, — “ Mr. Edson, did you ever know any one in your place by the name of Harlow ? ”

“ There is a widow lady there by that name, madam.”

“ There was a Mrs. Harlow who used to live near Lakeside ; and her daughter has named her boy Edson, — Charles Edson ; and I thought you might be a former acquaintance of the old lady’s, sir.”

“ Ah, indeed ! and do you know the lady’s maiden name ? ”



“Harlow : she told me that she did not change her name in marrying.”

“Do you know where she resided before she came here ? ”

“I do not, sir, — that is, not positively : somewhere in Maine, I believe.”

Here Mrs. Granger interposed. “It is nothing strange, Mrs. Grant, for a gentleman in Mr. Edson’s position to have children named after him. There was mother’s cousin, Albion Field, — Gov. Field of Maine. I have heard her say, that, during his term of office, he was very popular with the people, — Cousin Field was ; and, during his term of office, there were, at the least, a hundred boys named for him. Indeed, I should not be surprised, if the truth was known, if there were twice that number ; for you can hardly go into a neighborhood in the State but you will find an Albion F., — perhaps two or three of them.”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Grant : “I do not doubt it in the least. Every one of my boys is named for a president or some great general, — Washington, Madison, Monroe, Lafayette. The last was a Frenchman, and I don’t like the French very well ; but then he was so good a man, and the friend of Washington too.”

“How many boys have you, madam ? ” asked Mr. Edson, smiling.

“Only four, sir ; and I never give my children two names. I don’t believe in such nonsense ; but I sometimes think it would have been more Christian-like if I had given some of them Bible-names. But what I wanted to say was, I could not have named my boys after those great men, if I had never heard of them ;



and so Helen Harlow must have heard of you in some way, or she could not have named her boy for you : and, as she was brought up here, I thought her mother might have known you some time."

Mr. Granger and his wife were terribly annoyed, though they tried to conceal it from Mr. Edson ; while the latter, at the mention of the name Helen, started, changed color, and then, smiling to hide his emotion, said, —

" Really, I think I must see this lady who has named her boy for me : I may find an old acquaintance."

Granger tried to change the subject by proposing music ; but Mrs. Grant would not be put off. She continued talking of Mrs. Harlow, — the time she came to Lakeside, the circumstances connected therewith, &c., — till Mr. Edson began to suspect who it was : and then he questioned further, till Mrs. Granger began to wonder at it ; and Mrs. Grant, elated at having interested the gentleman, talked faster than ever.

The next day, Mr. Granger was surprised by a request from his uncle to visit Lakeside with him. " I believe," said he, " that this Mrs. Harlow is an old acquaintance of mine, though I have never known her by that name."

" Mrs. Harlow is dead," said Granger.

" But her daughter, — the one who has named her boy for me."

" Is an unmarried woman, and a mother. You do not wish to seek such an acquaintance ?"

" Not married ! " he gasped.

Granger looked up, and saw that his uncle was as pale as death. " What is the matter ? " he asked in alarm.



"The mother dead, and the daughter ruined!" he continued, without heeding the question; and then, looking up, and seeing Granger's expression of astonishment, he said, —

"I see, Edward, that I must make you my confidant. Yes: I am satisfied that they are the same; and, if so, Helen Harlow is my own child. Her mother was a schoolmate of mine. We grew up together, and — and I — I betrayed and forsook her."

"My God, uncle! and is this true?" exclaimed Granger, starting to his feet.

Mr. Edson, mistaken as to the cause of his nephew's emotion, continued: "I know it: it was a dastardly act, — one that, the longer I live, the more I regret. But for Helen, I should feel even worse than I do about it. It haunted me continually, — the memory of it: I tried to put it aside by joining the church; and, for a time, I did flatter myself that the ghost was laid. Indeed, I was becoming hard, self-righteous; when, all unexpected, Helen came upon me, and demanded a thousand dollars as the price of her silence. She did not wish to injure me, — the brave girl! but it was her right, and she would have it. She got it too: and, though not willingly given, after it was done I felt the better for it, have ever since; for it seemed as if I had in part compensated for the wrong. My wife died about a year since; and I came out here hoping to find Mary, and, if she was free, to marry her if she would have me. Too late, too late! she is dead, and my daughter, my only daughter, disgraced!"

Granger groaned aloud. He had hoped that his uncle was mistaken; but the mention of that visit east



put it beyond the possibility of doubt that Helen Harlow was his own cousin.

Mr. Edson began to think that there was some cause, further than he had supposed, for Mr. Granger's manifestation of feeling; so he waited in silence for the next remark. "Uncle," said he, at length, "I am the wretch who seduced your child."

"You!" said he, recoiling as if from a serpent, while his eyes flashed fire. For one moment he was the outraged, angry father; and the next, the memory of his own sin sweeping over him, he sank into the nearest seat, and, burying his face in his hands, neither spoke nor moved for several minutes.

At length he looked up, and said, "My boy, I pity and forgive you; for, though the world may pass a different judgment, by just so much as the betrayer is guiltier than the betrayed, by so much must you suffer more than she."

"I believe it, uncle. Still, society, by apologizing for us, and condemning the woman, really tempts us to sin."

"Yes: society condemns and pities one party; but it has but little condemnation and less pity — I might say no pity — for the other party. The more I think about these things, the more it looks to me like practical atheism, — a total ignoring of God's laws, as inherent in his works. It recognizes only that which it perceives, or, in other words, only that punishment which it inflicts."

"So it seems to me," said Granger. "Still, I am no metaphysician, and do not claim to be a judge in these matters: I only know that I *suffer*. Oh! if I had only married Helen, how much happier I should be to-day!"



"But how are these things to be remedied, Edward?"

"I know of no other way than to make man feel that he must be the greatest sufferer. We are selfish beings; and I sometimes think that it is the only channel through which we can be reached, — self-love."

"But we are told that we must ignore self, to be good."

"I can't help it if we are: we can not do it; and, if we look closely, we shall find that we are told many things which will not stand the test."

"Perhaps we are right; in fact, I know that you are: but I must go to Lakeside, and see Helen. Will you go with me?"

"No, I can not. I have not seen her since before I married Mrs. Granger; have never seen my boy, neither do I deserve to. Still, I should like to have one good look into his eyes, one kiss from his innocent lips."

"Well, go with me then. I am sure there is nothing wrong in your going to Lakeside with me. People know the child is yours, of course."

"No: she has never told; and I was so villainously sly, that people did not even suspect I was more to her than any one else."

"Strange."

"She is a remarkable woman, uncle, though she was but an innocent child when I first met her, — but seventeen, not hardly that, when her child was born."

"One ought to be a woman at seventeen."

"And we are hardly called men at twenty-one. I was twenty-four when I met Helen: she less than six-



teen. Woman is counted as the weaker vessel ; yet, at an age when we are looked upon as mere boys, she is expected to stand firm against all our flattery, our sophistry, our promises, our strongest oaths : she is expected to stand firm against all this, or she is condemned, cast aside, perhaps crushed into a life of infamy."

" I know that what you say is true, Edward, — know that man claims the right to test a woman thus, and society accords it. Not directly, in so many words, but just as really ; for, unless the circumstances are peculiarly aggravated, the frowns we receive from woman are like those that a partial mother gives to a child. Pleased with his smartness, and yet feeling that it will not do to openly approve, she frowns in such a manner that the stimulus to perseverance is even greater than that of smiles."

" And there is just where we are wronged, uncle. Why, I have heard young men, even church-members, boast that it was their right to take all that they could win in this direction. I have two now in my mind, — Asa and Henry Sidell, — who used openly to say this. Still, they were leading church-members, generally first in the prayer-meeting and other meetings. The girls of the neighborhood knew this, but they never refused their company.\*

" Yes ; and there was a case in our neighborhood, where a physician was waiting upon a young lady, — one of the first in the place : her father was in the State Legislature at the time of her death, as representative

\* This may be looked upon as an extreme case ; but it is a fact, and but one out of the many that I might give.



from his district, and had filled that office year after year. Well, he used all his powers of persuasion, threatening to forsake her if she did not yield, and all without success. Finally he left her, and went to waiting upon another lady; and this so affected her that she took poison, — thus practically accepting his *right* to test her, and so loving him through all, that she chose to die rather than to live without him.”\*

“The same one that I have heard mother tell of, Uncle Charles; and she said that Dr. Rhonell always acted, after that, as though haunted by Statia Jennings’s ghost.”

“True; and the balance of his life was one of intense wretchedness, — another instance of the wrong done to man, as well as to woman, by these mistaken ideas. But about going to Lakeside: if people do not know who the father of Helen’s child is, I can’t see what there is to hinder.”

“My wife knows.”

“Ah!”

“Yes: she has found it out. And, though her pride will keep her from telling others, would cause her to repel such a supposition even, still, she hates Helen so badly, that I sometimes fear she will be the death of her yet; and, when we are alone, she does not spare me, you may be sure. You can form some idea now of my domestic bliss. It is deserved, I know; but I sometimes feel that my punishment is greater than I can bear.”

“But how did Mrs. Granger learn this?”

“They say that I gave her the clew in my sleep;

\* Another fact.



and she has followed it up, till she knows as well as we know any thing that we can not make oath to. She has been to Lakeside, has seen Helen and the child, and, in company with others, so frightened poor Mrs. Harlow, that it was, no doubt, the means of her death."

"I can't see why she should trouble Mary."

"The intention was to drive Helen out of the place. But it was a failure; and the death of her mother, together with other things, so changed the tide of popular opinion, that she is now respected in spite of the chances against her."

"How old is her boy?"

"Six years; yes, nearly seven."

"The little puss!" said Mr. Edson, smiling, in spite of himself, at the recollection of the time in which she tortured his Judgeship so effectually. "The little puss! no wonder she was determined to have her thousand when she came to Ross Cove! But I little supposed that she had a mother's love to urge her on. Her boy was over two years old then."

"It was soon after her return that Mrs. Harlow died, and Helen moved to the village. The very charitable people of that place, because she would not explain to them her business, tell them where she had been, and why, — because of this, they imagined the very worst things possible, and went farther than they would have done at any other time."

"Well, I shall go and see Helen, at all events; and, if I could do so without compromising her mother, would acknowledge her before the world."



## CHAPTER VIII.

## TESTED AGAIN.

"But those who to the end endure  
The cross, shall wear the crown."

"Practically, it is the *cross* that wears the *crown*; and the only way in which it can possibly become ours is for us to carry that cross, till, by so doing, we become strong enough to pluck the crown from thence, and place it upon our own brows." — L. W.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force."



Is this the place where Miss Harlow resides?" And Helen looked up to see the form of Judge Edson of Ross Cove, Me., standing before her.

For one brief moment her self-possession forsook her. The blood flooded her face, and then, receding, left her as pale as a living person can well be; then, summoning back her proper self, she replied, —

"It is, sir. In what can I serve you?"

"Helen, my child!" said he, extending his hand.

She responded by a startled "Hush!" but it was too late; for the quiet assistant who stood just beyond the range of the judge's eye had heard all; and, before night, it was known all over Lakeside that Helen Harlow's father had come to see her. Of course, there was



a sensation ; and “ Like mother, like daughter ” was echoed by many a lip.

Mrs. Grant had just returned ; but she was so elated by the discovery, — so elated because it confirmed her previous suspicions, — that she could not trust to sending a letter, but must needs go right back to Albright, and tell her “ very dear friend,” Mrs. Granger, what she had learned.

“ Impossible ! ” exclaimed that lady, holding up both hands in astonishment.

“ It is not only possible, but true, my dear friend ; for ’Mandy Smith (’Mandy assists Helen, sometimes, when business is brisk ; though I can’t see, for my part, how any mother can let a daughter go there, and I told Mrs. Smith so only yesterday) — well, ’Mandy was standing just a little out of sight when the Hon. Mr. — what do you call him ? — came in. They didn’t know — nobody in Lakeside — who it was ; but I had seen him here, and told them. Well, as I was saying, ’Mandy was standing just out of sight when he came in ; and says he, ‘ Helen, my child ! ’ but she looked scared like, and says she, ‘ Hush ! ’ ”

“ Oh, nonsense, Mrs. Grant ! it don’t follow, from that, that he is her father. Elderly gentlemen often say ‘ my child ’ to those who are not even relatives. It is a common thing ; and then his position, you know, gives him the right to feel a fatherly interest in those who have come from the same State. A gentleman of his standing, Mrs. Grant, from one of the best families in the State, a Christian mother, and a Christian himself, — the idea is preposterous, that he should *claim* such as her as his child ! ”



“ O Mrs. Granger ! you are so innocent, know so little of the ways of the world ! Such things don't hurt a man. It is a little uncommon, I know, for them to own such children ; but then his position is such that I suppose he feels sort of independent, and can afford to do what we common people could not think of doing.”

Mrs. Granger winced to have her own arguments turned against her so adroitly, and was proceeding to deny further, when she was interrupted with, —

“ I tell you it is so, Mrs. Granger ; for he don't deny it. The Rev. Mr. Gordon was in town yesterday, — the one, you know, who preached Mrs. Harlow's funeral-sermon ; any thing but a Christian, I call him, from the course he is taking. And betwixt you and me, Mrs. Granger, though I wouldn't like to say it to every one, — but I don't believe he takes Helen's part as he does for nothing : ministers are not always better than other people, you know. Well, as I was saying, this Maine man told Mr. Gordon that it was almost the only thing he had ever done which he really regretted, — his treatment of Helen's mother.”

Mrs. Granger could dispute the point no longer, of course ; but she wished the “ dear friend ” had been almost anywhere else but at her house when Uncle Edson came, while Mrs. Grant continued, —

“ Helen is the very image of him. I saw that as soon as I looked at him ; and this, with the fact that her boy is named for him, decided the question in my mind then, as to the relation they sustained to each other. I tell you, Mrs. Granger, there is not much that escapes my notice.”



“I should think as much!” snapped Mrs. Granger. Mrs. Grant, however, was too intent upon her own merits to notice the tone in which these words were uttered. But it is time that we returned to Lakeside.

How those two words “My child!” thrilled through the soul of the poor girl who had never known a father’s love! And, but for the fact that the knowledge thus unintentionally given to the public would bring a stain upon her mother’s memory, she could have yielded to the delicious thrill which was thus sent through her soul.

As it was, she turned calmly to her assistant, and said, “I will finish the work you have in hand, Miss Smith; and you can go to Mrs. Miller’s, and get your new dress fitted.”

Now, “Miss Smith” would much rather have staid there at that particular time; though, half an hour before, she thought, that, if Miss Harlow would only spare her to have the dress fitted that day, why, she could have it to wear the next Sunday, — a very desirable thing, as every one of her six good dresses had been worn at least a dozen times each; and one gets tired, you know, of seeing the same old things so long.

However, there was that in Helen’s manner that admitted of no appeal; so, without a word, she laid aside the work referred to, took the material for the new dress, and repaired to the dressmaker’s.

When she was out of hearing, Helen turned to her father and said, “Mr. Edson, was it not enough that my mother’s life was blighted by you, that you must come here to cast your shadow upon her grave?”



“O Helen, my child!” Here Helen cast a glance toward her boy. “Yes, I know that too, and” —

“Charlie, come and kiss mother, and then go and play with your marbles, out in the back yard.”

The child sprang into his mother's arms, and was held close in a passionate embrace; then, as he turned to go, the judge said, “And will not Charlie kiss me too?”

He looked at his mother, and shrank back. “He is timid with strangers,” she said; then, answering the look, — “never mind, darling; run along.” He would have kissed the stranger, notwithstanding, had she but smiled; and she knew it: but she felt that she could not bear it; and so she sent him away.

“Helen, my child, I did not come here to make you trouble. I had hoped to find your mother living; and, as my wife has been dead these two years, to induce her to marry me, if possible, that I could indeed be a father to you.”

Helen shook her head, while Mr. Edson continued: “I know that it is too late, so far as she is concerned; but you — I have told my boys the story, and they wait to welcome you as a sister.”

“Would they welcome me with my child?” she asked.

Mr. Edson's countenance fell. “Perhaps that would not be so easy; still, it might be remedied, — even this objection; for I did not tell them your name, — the name your mother bore. I did not know it myself. You can still be called Harlow, and pass as a widow.”

“Yes; and he asked, again and yet again, the cause of my husband's death, where he was born, where his relatives are, &c. No; that would never do.”



“ I don’t see why you could not do it for the sake of your child, as your mother did for hers.”

“ My mother’s ideas and mine may be somewhat different, sir ; but, so far as that is concerned, I should not go, were it otherwise than it is. I could hardly trust myself with one who has once shown himself so utterly unworthy of confidence.”

“ O Helen ! ”

“ How did you learn,” she continued, without heeding his deprecatory words, — “ how did you learn that I was a mother and not a wife ? You said that you knew.”

“ From the child’s father.”

She looked up in amazement.

“ Yes, and you will be still more surprised when I tell you — what he did not know till recently — that he is your own cousin.”

“ My cousin ! ”

“ Yes : your cousin, — my own sister’s child. I have just come from his house ; and I tell you, Helen, that I would rather be in your place than his : you are the happier of the two.”

“ Yes : poor Edward ! he has made a sad mistake,” she murmured.

“ ‘ Poor Edward ! ’ I see, my child, that you pity him, notwithstanding the wrong he has done you ; and still, you will make no allowance for me. I have suffered too. Nay, I very much doubt if my life has been as happy as your mother’s was, — not half as happy as it would have been with her.”

Helen arose to her feet. “ Leave me,” said she ; “ for I can not bear more now.”



He arose also, and stood, with hat in hand, looking at her entreatingly.

“Go!” she cried, throwing her hands in front of her, with the palms turned toward him, as if she would ward off even the sense of his presence: “go! I can not trust you: it is selfishness that prompts you. You want a daughter’s love in your old age; but I can not, I will not give it! Oh! why have you come here to disturb the current of my life? to try to tempt me from my life’s work? Suffered, have you? It is well. Suffer on; and some time, somewhere, in the distant future, you may reach the point of expiation: till then, go!” And, sinking into a seat, she burst into one of those passionate fits of weeping that exhaust rather than soothe.

Without another word, he turned and left her; but he was no sooner out of sight, than her feelings changed, and she accused herself of cruelty. Indeed, her course toward him had been prompted more by the struggle between the yearning for a father’s love, and the certainty that she could not carry out her life-purpose if she accepted it, than from a spirit of unforgiving bitterness.

That same afternoon, — for events always seem to come in clusters, — Reid came into the place, and, in passing along the street, noticed groups of persons standing together in earnest conversation. Coming close to one of these before they perceived him, he heard Helen’s name mentioned.

“What is the matter now?” thought he; then, finding that they hesitated when they saw him, he went boldly up and asked what the excitement was.



"Nothing," said one ; " only Helen Harlow's father is in town."

"Helen's father!" Then the conversation he had heard that night by the lake flashed across his mind ; and, instead of saying, "I thought he was dead," he simply added, "Where is he?"

"At the public-house," was the reply.

At first he thought he would go directly there ; but, after thinking over the matter, decided to see Helen before he did so. She met him calmly, though her face still showed traces of the recent storm.

"What is it, Helen?" he asked.

"My father is in town, and the sight of him has called up feelings of no very pleasant nature ; still, I shall survive, I think," she replied with a smile.

"Survive ! I should like to know what you wouldn't survive ! O Helen ! why will you persist in stemming the tide alone ?"

"Hush ! not another word. One is enough to contend with in one day. And I don't feel like talking now ; so, if you wish to learn any thing more, go and find Mr. Edson. He is at the public-house, I believe."

"Not the Hon. Mr. Edson, from Ross Cove, Maine ?"

"The same, sir."

"Edward Granger's uncle ?"

"Edward Granger's uncle. But I thought you were to ask me no more questions, Mr. Reid ; at least, not now."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Harlow. Good-afternoon." But he was no sooner out of the house than the thought, "Now she will believe that I am angry," induced him



to turn back, for the purpose of showing her that he was not.

“I thought you had gone,” said she.

“And so I had; but feared I had not started right, and so returned to make sure.”

She read his thought. “I knew that you were not angry; so you need not have turned back for that.”

“Well, I will go along, then, and hope you will feel better when I return.”

“Which I hope will not be to-day,” she said, looking up with a defiant smile.

“Thank you: I will try not to offend.” And again she was alone; but she felt better already. Her conversation with him had proved a diversion, gradually bringing her back from the depth of feeling into which the visit of her father had plunged her; so she had no need to wait for his return ere his hope was realized.

Reid went to the public-house, and asked for Mr. Edson; introduced himself as a friend of Mr. Granger's of Albright, and was kindly received. After speaking upon general topics a while, he said, —

“Mr. Edson, you will excuse me if I seem impertinent: but I have just learned a fact in which I feel much interested; and I wish to have some conversation upon the subject.”

Mr. Edson looked up inquiringly.

“I have known Miss Harlow, sir, for some time, and respect her very much, and” — He paused, as if fearing to offend.

“Go on,” said the judge pleasantly.

Thus encouraged, he continued: “I have just learned that you, sir, are her father; and permit me to say



that she is one of whom any father ought to be proud, notwithstanding appearances."

"You seem to be her friend, to say the least."

"I am, sir: I should be happy to make her my wife, if she would consent."

"I think, from what I can see and hear, Mr. Reid, that she is made of pretty stern stuff; and I wonder at her being in the condition in which I find her."

"She has learned from bitter experience to be what she is. Better so than to sink." And then Reid went on to tell of the time that she had overheard the conversation between him and Granger; of her vow at that time, — a vow which she seemed determined to keep, no matter how tempted to change her purpose.

Mr. Edson listened attentively. "That explains," said he, "some remarks she made this afternoon. I couldn't understand what she meant, when, on offering to take her home with me, and to recognize her as a daughter, she asked me why I had come to tempt her."

"She refused you, then?"

"Most decidedly; rejected my offers of love and protection with scorn, and bade me leave her."

"She was suffering intensely, sir, or she would not have done that. O sir! you have but little idea of what she has had to endure." And then he proceeded to tell of that other time in the rocks, when he had been concealed, and had heard all that those women had said; of what he found when he returned four weeks afterward; and, lastly, of that night when he was awakened from sleep, and so strangely impelled toward Helen's home.

"My God! what a demon!" exclaimed the astonished



listener. "And she really would have burned them in their sleep!"

"So it seems, though I could bring no proof but my own assertion; and, if I had told how I came to be there, no one would have believed it, as she boldly accused me of being there for the worst of purposes, and that she had planned to smoke us out, — declared that she wished that the whole village was there, as they would not have so much charity for Helen then.

"Why, she even threatened to go and proclaim that she had suspected all was not right, and had followed me there on purpose to learn if her suspicions were correct."

"And you allowed yourself to be frightened out in that manner, Mr. Reid, by threats of a woman?"

"For the sake of one woman, Mr. Edson, I left another to the punishment of her own reflections. I wished to protect Helen as far as possible; and I did not wish to stand before the community in such a light that all I could do would have the opposite effect. I knew that she had no intention of doing this unless I forced her to it in self-defense; and so I decided to watch and wait. I told Granger, however, so that he could help me watch."

"Help you watch?"

"Yes; she has not given up her purpose of injuring Helen, I can assure you."

"And I shall not leave her here without another effort to induce her to go with me. Will you help me, Mr. Reid, to persuade her?"

"In the morning I will: I think we had better leave her to her own thoughts to-night."



“Poor Helen! she was but a woman, after all; and how the woman nature pleaded for love and protection! How she hungered for it! Ah! but she had trusted once, — had trusted, and walked upon thorns ever since. Should she accept protection now, and thus deprive herself of even the poor privilege of showing that she could walk thereon firmly? Why struggle thus proudly, when a husband’s love and a father’s care were urged upon her?”

But there was another voice which whispered, “It is not for yourself alone: one successful effort in this direction, one demonstration of woman’s power to endure and triumph, will put courage into the heart of many a poor wronged girl, and keep her from sinking, perhaps, to the deepest degradation.” And thus she struggled and reasoned all the night long. The morning showed her pale, haggard even, but quietly firm.

It was thus that her father and lover found her, and knew, almost before speaking, what the result of their efforts would be. Still, they proffered their requests, and urged the proudly independent girl, with all the eloquence that they could command, to change her decision.

“I can not, I can not,” was her constant reply.

“You mean you will not,” said her father, losing his patience at length.

Her eyes flashed. “Well, I will not, then. The only way in which I have won this much, sir, is by being true to myself; and I shall hardly change my course now. Had it not been for my self-assertion, neither you nor Mr. Reid would have put forth any efforts in my behalf.”



“Helen!”

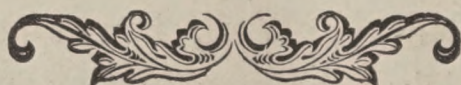
“No, Mr. Reid: I do not wish to be unjust to you. You have been a true friend; but it is because I have been my own friend, — have been true to myself. Had I consented to take the position that the world unjustly assigns to such as I, you would never have taken the interest in me that you have.”

“You are right,” he replied: “you have *commanded* my respect.”

“And I intend to continue to *command* it, sir; and not for myself only, but for others. There are others, and they are found everywhere, who are constantly sinking out of sight, only because they have no faith in the possibility of reaching solid ground; let such but see that even one has done so, and they, too, will make the effort.”

“I see your position, Helen,” said her father. “You look upon yourself as a martyr to principle, and glory in it.”

“And as I will not have that glory taken from me, you may as well cease your efforts in that direction,” said she, with one of those smiles which so effectually forbid further conversation.





## CHAPTER IX.

## CRAZY JANE'S STORY.

"God winketh *not* at ignorance, but, by the action of unerring law, still urges on to knowledge. The suffering caused by our mistakes is but the lash with which our loving mother Nature scourges us laggards onward in the path which leads to Wisdom's realm."—L. W.

"Get wisdom, and, with all thy gettings, get understanding."—BIBLE.



AND who was Crazy Jane? A poor old woman bent with age, who, with frosted hair and tottering step, wandered at will; a harmless creature of seventy years, who muttered to herself by hours: and people said that she was hopelessly insane.

Helen was somewhat surprised upon looking up one morning, about a year after the above events, to see this poor old creature standing in the door of her little shop, regarding her very intently.

"Good-morning, mother. Have a seat?" said she, pushing a chair toward the bent form.

"And is it mother that you call the poor old creature? Blessings on the darling!" was the response, as she took the proffered chair, still regarding Helen with the same fixed gaze.

"What is it, mother? any thing I can do for you?"

"Nothing, nothing. You can do nothing for a poor



old creature like me. No, no," still shaking her head; "nothing for me. I was only looking to see what kind of stuff you was made of, that you could still keep your eye bright, and yourself clear of a double load all this time."

"A double load?"

"Yes, yes, child; a double load. Many a poor creature has taken a miserable scamp of a husband to help them carry their load of shame, and found, to their sorrow, that their last state was worse than the first; that the cover to the shame was heavier than the shame itself."

Helen smiled.

"Yes: and 'twas a brave thing that you did, my child, — a brave, brave thing; and when I heard them talking about it, — the old man and the young one, — somewhere nigh on to a year since, I said, 'I will look upon the face of the lass who could scorn the man who had wronged her, and defy the world that would crush her.' But poor old Jane was sick from the cold she took that night sleeping under the stars; was sick for nearly a twelvemonth: and they thought, hoped, that she would die."

"But why did you sleep out of doors, mother?"

"And why did I sleep out of doors, do ye ask?"

"Yes: why did you do it, when there are so many houses in this beautiful world? Surely, no one would turn a poor old lady like yourself away from their door."

"Oh, but bless her tender heart! she is calling me a lady, — me that was the wife of old Josh Morgan, and the mother of a gallows-bird. A lady! ha, ha, ha!"



and the poor, withered old creature rocked back and forth with an hysterical laugh that presently changed to a wild, wailing cry. "O Johnny! my poor boy! you was not to blame that your mother planted the seeds of murder in your heart before you saw the light of this dark world. O Johnny, Johnny! my poor, poor boy!"

Helen finally succeeded in soothing her; when, going back to the question why she had slept out of doors, she said, "I slept out of doors because the proud lady, — she was a lady, you know, — she shut the door in my face; telling me that her house was no place for such as me. I was too tired to go further, and too sad to knock at another door in that place, — Albright, they call it; but it has been all dark to me.

"Yes: I was too tired to travel farther; and so, instead of going out at the gate, I slipped around the garden way, and, crawling under a broad bench, lay down and went to sleep. When I waked, there were two men sitting upon that very bench, talking of you; and when the younger one had told the other your story, I said, 'And I will see the darling's face yet;' and here I am."

"And tired and hungry too, mother. Lie down here on this lounge, and rest a little, while I tell Susan to make you a good cup of tea."

The old lady's lip quivered. "Kind, kind! I might have known it: the brave are always kind."

"No great credit to one who expects to be old herself some day, and will want some one to take care of her then," said Helen.

"Yes, and you will have the care too. When one is brave enough to help themselves, all things help them.



There's the bright little lad : he will care for the mother who was too brave to give him another father when his own would not own him. Come here, little one, and let a poor old woman put her hand upon your head and bless you."

Charlie looked at his mother. "Yes ; go and see the good grandmother, my darling."

The child walked quietly up, and looked into the old woman's face with a sort of wondering gaze ; for he was not accustomed to seeing very old people. Jane regarded him intently for a moment ; and then, sinking upon her knees, she clasped her withered hands above his head, and said, "O God of love, wisdom, and power ! bless this child, and make him an honest, truthful man, — one who will say what he means, and mean what he says. Amen."

"Amen," responded Helen.

"Yes : and you may well say amen ; for, if he is that, his words will deceive no poor maiden, to break her heart. And now, when I have rested and eaten, I will tell you what has made 'Crazy Jane' what she is ; that is, if you will listen to her story."

"Certainly, certainly, mother, I will listen to your story ; but I don't believe you are as crazy as some people think you are."

"Well, if I ain't, I ought to be ; for it is hardly polite to call people fools or liars. One ought to be what he is called ; for it makes the good folks mad if he, or especially if she, is not. That is what makes some folks hate you so, my bird. You won't be what they say you are."

Jane said this in that peculiarly cunning manner



which partially insane people so readily assume ; and Helen laughed heartily, in spite of herself.

“ You may laugh, my bird, for you have earned the right to laugh : but poor old Jane should never do any thing but weep, and gnash her teeth, too, if she had any ; but, as it is, she must gum it till the judgment-day, I suppose.”

By this time she was ready to lie down, but made Helen promise, first, that she would not let her sleep more than half an hour. “ For,” said she, “ I am so deaf that I shall not hear Gabriel’s trumpet, if you don’t ; and I want to be at the judgment to tell God about my boy, and what it was that made him so bad : and maybe he will let me suffer for myself and Johnny too ; and then Johnny can go to heaven, you know.”

At this manifestation of mother-love from the poor, wrecked creature, Helen could hardly restrain her tears : but she gave the required promise ; and the weary head was soon resting quietly upon a softer, cleaner pillow than it had had for many a long day.

Helen put the clock back half an hour, giving her an hour instead of half of one, and, when she awoke, had a good dinner ready for her. This she ate in silence, and then lay down and went to sleep again. When she awoke the second time, rest and food had so far restored her that she appeared quite rational. She did not talk much, however, but seemed watching both Helen and little Charlie with a quiet sort of interest, as though she was taking notes, and forming an opinion of what she saw and heard.

As the evening advanced, she manifested a little rest-



lessness, and finally asked, "Will you shut up for the night soon?"

"Presently," was the reply; and then, noticing the anxious look upon the wrinkled face, Helen asked, "Why?"

"Because I wish to tell you the story of my life."

"I should like to hear your story, mother; but will it not worry you too much to tell it to-night?"

"No: I must tell it to-night, or not at all."

This reply startled Helen. She looked at the poor creature, and saw that she was perfectly sane; and, recollecting that insane people sometimes recover their reason just before they die, she hastened to close the blinds and fasten the door, and then sat down to listen.

Jane cleared her throat once or twice; drew a long breath, and then began:—

"It is a sad story, Miss Harlow, that I have to tell you: but it will do you good,—will strengthen you in the path you have chosen, and therefore I tell it.

"To look at me now, one would hardly think that I was ever beautiful; but I was. I was the oldest and the idolized child of Wilson Ashton of — County, in this State. You look surprised, and well you may; for the Ashtons are a proud family: but the Hon. R. S. Ashton, of whom so much has been said, who is so widely known and so highly respected, is my own brother's son; though I will do him the justice to say that he does not know of the relationship.

"When I was fifteen years of age, Henry Norcroft,—here you start again, for the Norcrofts stand as high in Vermont as do the Ashtons in this State,—



I was fifteen, as I have said, when I first saw Henry Norcroft. He was twenty, and my very beau ideal of manly beauty ; and, as he boarded with us while preparing for college, we were, as a matter of course, thrown much into each other's company.

“ I do not think that Henry meant to be a villain : I know that he did not. But led on, step by step, by an attraction that neither seemed able to resist, little thinking where we were drifting, we floated with the tide, till, alas ! it was too late, too late, to return.

“ He loved me, and would have married me ; but his parents would not consent : they would disown him if he did. They were ambitious for him, and his prospects should not be blighted for the sake of such as I, if they could prevent it. He was not strong enough to contend against their opposition, and so I was left to perish : yes, it would have been far better to have perished by my own hand than to live as I have.

“ My parents, when their pride was touched, seemed to have lost all their love for me ; and their only thought, judging from their acts, was how they could dispose of me without disgracing themselves. The public, as yet, had not been made aware of my condition. True, a few suspected it, but dared not speak of their suspicions ; but there was one, a man twice my age, and one from whose keen eye nothing that he attempted to fathom could be hidden.

“ This man professed to feel a very great interest in Henry, gained his confidence, and won our secret from him, just as we were puzzling our brains over the matter, not knowing what to do. He then informed Henry's parents, and they sent for him to come home.



Henry vowed that he would not leave me, and then his father came for him. Then my parents learned the terrible truth ; and my father, in the first paroxysm of his rage, ordered me from the house. Just here Mr. Morgan stepped in to accomplish his ends. He knew, that, under any other circumstances, it would have been useless, and worse than useless, to speak of making me his wife.

“ But my father was rich, and would do any thing to keep disgrace from his name ; so this man Morgan told him that he had loved me from the first hour he saw me, but, feeling that I could never be his, had buried his feelings in his own bosom. ‘ But now,’ said he, ‘ if you will give her the portion designed for her, so that I can have the means to make her comfortable, — I am poor, through the villainy of others, — if you will do this, I will marry her, and take her out of the State.’

“ Of course, my father consented. I loathed the man, and felt that I would as soon die as to marry him. But I could not die, though I prayed for it ; and the only alternative was, Morgan or open disgrace and the street. O Miss Harlow ! could I have had but *one example* before me of one who had braved disgrace, and won respect at last, — could I have known that such a thing was possible, — I would have dared all.

“ But I did not even dream that it could be ; for I found in the first book that I ever read, these lines : —

“ ‘ Man tarnishes his character, and brightens it again ; but if woman chance to swerve from the strictest rules of virtue, —



‘ Ruin ensues, reproach and endless shame ;  
One false step for ever blasts her fame.  
In vain the loss she may deplore,  
In vain look back to what she was before :  
She sets like stars that fall to rise no more ;’

and every thing that I saw and heard confirmed the dreadful sentence.

“ So, like a martyr to the stake, I went to — I will not call it my marriage, for it was not: it was a living sacrifice upon the altar of respectability. We went out of the State, as had been stipulated; and my parents hid their aching hearts under the semblance of smiles, as they talked of ‘ Jane’s marriage with Mr. Morgan, a rich bachelor from Massachusetts, and the trial of having her go so far away from home.’

“ They visited me once or twice a year for a while: not so much because they wished to see me, as for the sake of keeping up appearances; and, after my baby died, I went home once. I did not wish to go; but Mr. Morgan insisted, and I had to yield.

“ He could act the gentleman if he chose; was not bad looking, and was very attentive: and, as my old friends gathered around to welcome me, they little dreamed of the terrible secret that was hidden in my bosom. But what mattered it that my heart was breaking, that my life was an earthly hell, so that the family credit was saved!

“ Oh! could I have known that my baby would not live, I would have defied them all. I wept passionately when he was taken from me, for he was Henry’s child; but Mr. Morgan was glad of it, and he told me so. ‘ He shouldn’t have to bring up other people’s brats now,’ he said.



“He was for ever telling me of his love, and especial kindness in marrying me ‘*under the circumstances* ;’ exacting a great deal of gratitude for so doing. When I had lived with him about two years, another child was born to me ; but, from the first moment that I knew that I must become a mother again, I felt an intense desire to destroy it. I nearly killed myself two or three times in my efforts to do so, but failed.

“When I came to look upon the little helpless form, however, my feelings changed to tender pity, which, as he grew older, ripened into love. His little cunning ways,—how sweet they were ! But I had sown, and I must reap. As he grew older, he manifested an intense desire to kill whatever was in his power. It seemed the same feeling that I had had toward him before he was born ; and oh, how it grieved me !

“No one had ever told me that such effects could follow from the cause I have named : but I felt that it must be so ; and when I found a dog, a cat, or a pig dead, killed by my little Johnny, I used to feel that it was I, instead of he, that had done the deed.

“I tried, in every way that I could possibly think of, to educate him out of this trait of character ; and the harder I tried to benefit him, the more I loved him. I had nothing else to love, and I made this one love idolatry. How I wept and pleaded and prayed with him ! He loved me, poor child, but he could not help it. He would lie to me : this trait he inherited from his father.

“I never loved Mr. Morgan ; but, after I married him, I tried to love him,—tried to be a good wife ; used to believe what he told me, until I was forced to see that he was really untruthful. But it takes a great



deal of evidence to make one believe what they do not wish to be true ; and it was not till the winter before Johnny was born, that I became fully satisfied that I could believe only what I knew to be true, when the man who called me ' wife ' told me any thing. And the trait which annoyed me so much in the father seemed a part of the very nature of my child."

Helen had listened attentively to this point, without interrupting the narrative ; but here the facts related struck her so forcibly that she began to question.

" What reason have you, Mrs. Morgan, for thinking this to be the cause of your son's doing as he did ? " she asked.

" Because it is Nature's law that like should produce like. But please don't call me Mrs. Morgan : any name but that," was the quiet reply.

" But this is not the reason given by our religious teachers. They tell us that such manifestations of wickedness are the result of human depravity."

" Yes, Miss Harlow ; but whence comes the depravity ? Not from the inmost soul, which is God's work ; for then it would not be human, but divine, depravity. No : it comes from the body, the brain, — the channels through which the soul acts. The depravity comes from the human part of us, and, consequently, is essentially human."

" Why, mother ! " said Helen, surprised at the depth of thought manifested in the old lady's words : " you beat the preachers in explaining these things."

" Perhaps, if they had passed through the furnace that I have, they would know better than to talk as they now do, — some of them, at least," was the prompt response.



“But to my story. Mr. Morgan had wasted, in gambling and drinking, all that my father had given him for marrying me; and, as he had no hopes of getting any thing more in that direction, he left me to seek another wife and another fortune. I was glad of this, and all the more so when I learned that he had a wife and three children near Albany, N.Y. So you see that I was not his wife, after all. But that made no difference, you know, for I was *ruined anyhow*; and his love of money saved the family reputation, as people *thought* I was his wife.

“I was only too glad to be left alone; for I could work for my boy, and I fancied that I could cure him of his bad habits if I had him all to myself. So, with better courage than I had felt for years, I laid my plans for taking care of myself and Johnny. I gathered together what little I had, sold what I did not need, and bought what I could with the avails, toward making things easy for me in the profession I had chosen, — that of washerwoman.

“Not a very genteel employment; but what had I to do with gentility? My only object of care was my boy. I chose this kind of work, also, because I could keep him with me more, could teach him to assist me, and thus obtain an influence over him, which I could not otherwise do. I kept him away from school; teaching him myself, and taking pride in seeing him keep in advance of those who went to school all of the time.

“In a word, I made him my inseparable companion; week-days and Sundays we were always together. He was quick to learn, recited longer lessons from the



Bible than any scholar who went to the sabbath school ; and I felt amply rewarded for all my care when I heard him spoken of as the smartest boy in the place. When he was twelve years old, there was an extensive revival in the village, and he was numbered with the converts. Now, indeed, I was happy. Surely, the grace of God was sufficient to keep him from evil !

“ His habit of untruthfulness seemed for a while broken ; and I am certain he meant to be good. But, alas ! natural tendencies were strong ; and, before two years had passed, I found him as untruthful as ever. Still, even here he manifested a wonderful care as to results : the same trait that his father exhibited so successfully whenever he chose, — that of keeping his real disposition hidden from those whose respect he desired to win ; and but few, except his unhappy mother, suspected his real character.

“ When he was sixteen, there was another remarkable revival of religion in the place ; and my John was again brought under an influence which held him for more than two years. If ever one tried to live a Christian, I am certain that he did. I could see, that, at times, the old feelings were struggling for the mastery ; but when I saw him conquer once, again, and yet again, I felt strong in the hope that he would eventually come off victor over all. I had faith to believe it. I asked God, in the strength of that faith, to make the thing hoped for a certainty ; but, when I felt the most certain that all was well, the barriers gave way, and the long-pent-up tendency broke forth with renewed violence,



“And not only this, — not only the tendency to lying and cruelty, — but still another: that of theft. I thought I must die, my agony was so great. ‘My son,’ I exclaimed one day, after a more flagrant manifestation than usual, — ‘my son, what makes you do so?’

“‘I don’t know, mother,’ he replied; and, throwing his arms around me, he wept as if his heart would break. Again there was an attempt at reformation, and again I began to hope. Things went on in this manner for a while longer: but my parents, in all these years, knew nothing of my place of residence; for Mr. Morgan, just before he forsook me, moved us into an entirely new neighborhood, and I had maintained a strict silence as to my whereabouts.

“But I must hasten with my story, or I shall not have the strength to finish.” There was such a look of suffering upon the old lady’s face as she said this, that Helen begged her not to go on; but she only shook her head. Resting her head in her hands for a few moments, as if to gather strength for the final effort, she resumed her story with, —

“The climax came at last. Johnny had been away from me more than usual for several weeks, till within a few days; but, during those few days, he had been unusually kind and attentive. That morning, — I shall never forget it, — he had been reading a very amusing story to me, and we were both laughing heartily over it, when there was a rap at the door. He turned pale, so pale that I noticed it, and wondered what it meant: but he arose quietly, and opened the door; and, before those standing there had time to speak, he said, ‘Yes, gentlemen, I am ready,’ taking his hat at the same



moment, and, turning to me, 'Mother, good-by;' and then walked away with those that I knew to be officers of justice.

"One of them made a move as if to confine him; but he said in a tone not intended for my ear, 'Not before my mother.' But I can not dwell upon the events of that awful time, further than to say that there had been a murder committed, and some of the money known to have belonged to the murdered man had been paid out by my unhappy boy. I learned where the corpse was; for it was only on the night before, and in the early evening, that the deed had been done. By some irresistible fascination, I was drawn to the place, and insisted upon seeing the face of the dead. They tried to keep me away, but it was of no use. But they little dreamed of the cause of the shriek that burst from my lips when my request was granted: they little thought that the man lying there had once called me wife, that his murderer was his own son.

"Yes: it was even so, though none knew it but myself. He had assumed another name, and was advertised in the papers as William Wilson, with the request that his relatives would come forward and claim his effects; but no one ever came. Had they advertised him as Joshua Morgan, the result might have been different. I don't know, though, for I am not certain that that was his true name.

"I retained my self-possession through the whole; talked with my poor boy of the deed, and, with his head lying on my bosom, he told me all. From the first moment that he saw the murdered man, he said that he had felt a desire to take his life; that the feel-



ing had grown stronger each time they met, until it seemed utterly impossible for him to do otherwise than he had done. 'I didn't want his money, mother; I felt no disposition to steal from him: and still I took it, — what little he had, — and then went and paid it out, a portion of it before I went home; changed a five-dollar-bill to pay for the nice steak that we had for our breakfast the next morning.'

"My God! what agony I suffered! How plainly I saw it all, — the causes that had led to this terrible result! They seemed traced upon my brain with a pen of fire, — the hatred I had felt for this man, and toward the child that must bear his name, the hunger, the longing I had experienced for just such food, and the frenzy of passion into which I had fallen when he refused to get it for me, and, at the same time, had held his money before my eyes, to show me that it was not because he could not, but because he would not purchase what I so much desired. I was so enraged, that, if I had had the power, I could have killed him as easily as if he had been a snake instead of a human being.

"My unborn babe had been the recipient of that feeling. The man had really been his own murderer; for it was the very feeling he aroused in me which nerved the hand that struck the blow. And, stranger still, the very food in kind that he denied me then was purchased by the money taken from his pocket by the hand that murdered him; even as I would have murdered him then, while the frenzy of rage was upon me.

"I said that the man really murdered himself. In



one sense, this was true ; and, in another, it was I that did the deed by the hand of my child. My poor boy ! he was the least guilty of the three, though human law, human shortsightedness, piled the whole blame upon his defenseless head ; while the papers, far and near, reiterated the story of his depravity.

“ I did not tell my poor boy what I have told you. I wish I had ; for it might have been some consolation to him to have known that his mother acquitted him of blame. But I stood by him just as long as they would let me, — was calm, outwardly, and loving to him through all : but when the final tragedy was over, the legal murder done, then my mind gave way ; and from that time to this, my life seems like one long, troubled dream.

“ And now you have my story, Miss Harlow. I have told it, as I said, to strengthen you in the path you have chosen. Better — oh, how much better ! — it would have been to have accepted public disgrace than to do as I did. To escape the consequences of a weakness, a folly, I plunged into crime : to escape the name of being vile, I made myself, or permitted others to make me, vile indeed ; for what greater pollution is there for woman than to take vows upon her lips from which her heart rebels ? to bear children to a man that she hates ?

“ My story is done, and so will soon be my troubled life ; for this period of perfect saneness is the lamp sent by pitying Heaven to light me from this dark earth. But I am weary, and would sleep.”

With tearful eyes, Helen prepared a couch for the aged limbs, and then sat, wrapped in thought, till long



after the midnight hour. Poor old Jane was sleeping quietly when she retired; but the next morning, when they went to awaken her, they found only the worn-out body from which the spirit had fled.

Helen wept not more freely over her own mother than she did over the remains of this lonely woman; but now they were tears of joy instead of bitterness, — joy that the tried spirit was at length free; and joy that she had been true to herself, had not married simply from a feeling of *respect*, and thus sacrificed her *self-respect*.

It was soon rumored through town that “Crazy Jane” was dead, had died at Helen Harlow’s; and, before noon, the town officers came to see about making arrangements for a pauper’s funeral. But Helen quietly put them aside, and proceeded to make the preparations necessary to a respectable burial.

“If you do this, Miss Harlow, you must do it on your own responsibility: the town will pay no unnecessary expense,” said they.

“I will take the responsibility,” she replied; and so they left her to herself. She furnished coffin and shroud, — the same as was furnished for her mother; sent for the Rev. Mr. Gordon of Glencove to preach the funeral-sermon, and had her buried by her mother’s side.

“A great deal of respect Helen Harlow shows her mother’s memory, — burying that old creature beside her!” said Mrs. Grant to her next neighbor. And others commented upon the fact as a piece of needless folly; some going so far as to say that there must be some cause for Helen’s course in this matter, further



than appeared upon the surface: and, for a while, it was confidently believed that "Crazy Jane" was really her grandmother.

Helen smiled when she heard this, and said that it made but little difference what people thought. This only made their tongues run the faster for a time; but soon, like other nine-days' wonders, the matter ceased to be talked of, and things settled back in their old channel.

In spite of Mother Grundy *alias* Mrs. Grant and her clique, — which, by the way, was not, in this case, a very large one, — Helen's shop continued to be the resort of the ladies of Lakeside; and Helen continued to furnish them with what they needed in her line, and to educate her boy, instead of sending him to the public school, as people thought she ought to do. And when a marble slab arose over poor Jane's grave, precisely like the one at Mrs. Harlow's, with the simple inscription, "He giveth his beloved sleep," people had so far learned that Helen Harlow had her own way of doing things, that there was but little said about it.





## CHAPTER X.

## THE WISDOM OF THE WISE.

"If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch."—BIBLE.



SOME six weeks after Jane Morgan's funeral, Helen received a visit from Mr. Gordon and his good wife. This did not surprise her, for they had been in the habit of calling occasionally ever since her mother's death.

But there was a look upon the reverend gentleman's face that puzzled her somewhat, as he was so much more staid and sober than usual.

"Miss Harlow," said he at length, "I feel that I have not done my duty as I ought; and I owe it to you, as well as to myself, to confess my remissness."

Helen looked up in surprise. "I can not imagine what you mean, sir," she said: "you have always been a true friend to me, and I have often felt that I hardly knew how to be grateful enough for your kindness."

"And is there no point, my child, upon which you have sometimes thought that I was remiss?" he asked.

"Not any, sir."

"Have I ever spoken to you about the welfare of your soul?"



“I believe that you have not ; that is, not directly : but your life — the course that you have pursued — has spoken for you, — has done more to make me feel that all did not put belief before life, profession before practice ; has done more to make me feel this than any amount of preaching could have done. Why, sir, I honestly think that I should have lost faith in humanity, should have become a perfect misanthrope, had it not been for Mrs. Gordon, Mr. Reid, and yourself.”

“I am glad, Miss Harlow, that my life has had its influence upon you ; but, as a Christian minister, I feel that I should have been more personal in this matter, should have pressed upon your notice the importance of becoming a true follower of Christ ; and I wonder that you have never thought upon it in this light.”

“Why, sir, I realized that the matter of my soul’s interest lay between me and my God, and supposed that you felt the same ; that is, I should have supposed so, if I had thought at all of your duty in this direction.”

Mr. Gordon made no reply for some moments, but looked at his wife with an expression of countenance that seemed to say, “A new feature in the case : the same independent originality here as elsewhere.”

Finally he asked, “Do you think you are a Christian, Helen ?”

“What do you mean by being a Christian ?”

“Have you experienced that change of heart which is necessary to becoming a child of God ?”

“I can not say that I have, Mr. Gordon.”

“And do you not know, that, without such a change, there is no hope of happiness beyond the grave ?”



"I am no theologian, Mr. Gordon; but, with your permission, I would like to ask you a few questions."

"Certainly, certainly."

"Have I a right to find fault with that which God does not find fault with?"

"Most assuredly not."

"Is it more difficult to please God than it is an earthly parent?"

"I dare not assert that it is."

"Are you not satisfied with your child, if you know that it is doing the very best it knows how?"

"I should be an unkind parent if I were not."

"Resting, then, upon these self-evident propositions, Mr. Gordon, I have no right to be troubled about the future."

"What do you mean, Miss Harlow?"

"I mean to say, that I am doing as well as I know how; that I never knowingly commit a wrong act: consequently, God is satisfied with me, and, being so, will take care of me."

"Trusting in your own righteousness, my poor child."

"No: in God's righteousness, — in the certainty that he will do just right; that he will not be angry with me for not doing better than I know how."

"Alas, alas! it is as I feared: blinded by your own false reasoning, you will not accept the true Saviour, because you do not see the need of him."

"Mr. Gordon, I confess I do not understand the theology of the churches: do you?"

"Do I?"

"Yes: do you understand what you teach, any fur-



ther than doing justly, dealing rightly with your fellow-creatures is concerned ? ”

“ I must confess, with Paul, that ‘ great is the mystery of godliness. ’ ”

“ How, then, can you, how could he, teach others that which was a mystery ? ”

“ How can we teach a mystery ? ”

“ Yes : how can you teach a mystery, Mr. Gordon ? If you understand a thing, it is no longer a mystery ; and, if you do not understand it, how can you teach it ? ”

“ We can understand the commandments, Miss Harlow : ‘ Thou shalt not kill ; thou shalt not steal, ’ &c. ”

“ Yes : but what has that to do with ‘ God manifest in the flesh, ’ ‘ being born again, ’ &c. ? ”

“ Simply this : if we violate these laws, we must suffer the penalty, unless we accept the Saviour provided. ”

“ But you have acknowledged, Mr. Gordon, that these things are a mystery ; that you yourself do not understand them : for, if you did, they would no longer be a mystery to you, if they were to Paul. Now, what I wish to know is this : how can we accept a mystery, and be sure that we are not deceived ? that it is just what it claims to be ? ”

“ You are asking hard questions, Helen. ”

“ You gave me permission to ask questions, sir. ”

“ I did ; and I presume they will do me good. There are none of us who think any too deeply. ”

Mrs. Gordon had thus far been simply a listener ; but now she said, “ I was fearful, husband, when you told me that you intended to talk with Miss Harlow



upon these subjects, that you would get into deep water."

"Well, wife, there is no harm done: it does one good to get into deep water occasionally."

"That is, if they do not go so deep but that they can get out again, I presume you mean," was her playful reply.

"But I have more questions to ask, Mr. Gordon," said Helen.

"Well, go on: it can do no harm to ask them, even if I can not answer them satisfactorily."

"What is meant by 'visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation'?"

"That law is done away with: the prophet emphatically says that the proverb, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,' should no more be used; but that every soul should bear its own sin."

"Does God change?"

"Not really; but he may in his manner of dealing with us."

"Where is the difference, so far as we are concerned, whether the change is an absolute or a relative one. If he changes in his manner of dealing with us, he is to us a changeable God; and it matters not what he may be otherwise."

"How, then, do you reconcile the above?"

"I do not try to reconcile it. I am not a teacher of theology, but I will tell you what I am doing, sir."

"Ah! and what are you doing?"

"I am thinking, questioning."

"Be careful, my child, that your questioning does not lead you astray."



“It is my opinion that a lack of thought would be more apt to have that tendency; but it is true, sir, that I have thought more deeply since listening to the story of poor Jane Morgan, than I ever did before; at least in some directions.”

“Indeed! and what was there in her history to affect you so deeply?”

“I will tell you.” Helen then proceeded to give Mr. Gordon and his wife the main incidents in the life of that unfortunate creature, dwelling more particularly upon what related to her boy, and her explanation of the causes which she believed had made him what he was.

The story awakened a new train of thought in the minds of both Mr. Gordon and his wife; and they were silent for some minutes after Helen had finished her recital. Mrs. Gordon was the first to speak. “I am not prepared to accept the conclusions that such a theory would lead to,” she said; “but I feel that there is a truth there somewhere. I can trace in my own children the influences that were brought to bear upon me before their birth; though I had never thought upon the fact in the light that you present it, Miss Harlow.”

“I do not wish to present these things in any particular light; for I do not see them clearly, — can not understand, as yet, their real bearing. I only tell them as they were told to me; and I, too, must say that my observation tends to confirm her conclusions. It seems to me, however, that it is in this manner that God visits the iniquities of the fathers, and of the mothers too, upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.”



"You mean," said Mr. Gordon, "that it will take three or four generations to educate out of children the evil tendencies born with them in consequence of the sins of parents?"

"Something like that," was the reply.

"It looks as if there was a truth here," said he, after another silence; "but, if so, I shall have to re-adjust my theology to find a place for it."

"Suppose, Mr. Gordon," said Helen, "that we continue to adjust our lives to the practical in religion, so that we shall need no re-adjustment there; suppose we continue to do this, and leave the theoretical, the theological, the mysterious, till deeper thought and fuller experiences enable us to decide more intelligently."

"A very wise proposition; and I, for one, shall be glad to accede to it," said Mrs. Gordon; "but, as husband's business is teaching, I don't know what he will think of it."

"Don't laugh at me, wife: I hope I am a learner as well as a teacher; for I am certain there is need enough of it."

"You have at least satisfied your conscience in respect to me," said Helen.

"Satisfied my conscience?"

"Yes: was it not conscience, a sense of your duty as a minister, that prompted you to speak to me of my soul?"

"I believe it was, Miss Harlow; but I confess the task to have been a great one for me: so, remember, you must look out for your own welfare on that point after this."



“I will remember,” she said; “and shall talk with you again upon these points some time.”

“I hope you will give me plenty of time to think first,” he replied.

“As much as you please, so that you really *think*.”





## CHAPTER XI.

## FOR THE LAST TIME.

"Yet once again I ask, Wilt thou be mine?"



THINGS moved on in their usual channel at Lakeside. Charles, or Charlie as he was always called, was ten years of age, and as fine, active a boy as was to be found in all the country round. Helen had never sent him to school; but he was far in advance, in his studies, of any boy of his age. People had accepted it as a settled fact, that Helen Harlow was competent to take care of herself, and that she would have her own way; consequently, they had ceased to dictate, or even to hope to change her purposes.

All but one; and he could hardly be said to hope, only as against hope. William Reid made one more effort to induce her to become his wife. He had been absent for several months; and, when she had the least thought of seeing him, she looked up, and he was standing before her.

"Good-morning, Mr. Reid. I was not thinking of seeing you to-day. I did not suppose you had returned."

"And do you ever think of me, Helen?" he asked.



"Most certainly I do. I should be very ungrateful to forget so good a friend as you."

"Gratitude! I had as soon you would forget me entirely."

"That I could not do, if I should try; and I have no disposition to try, even if that would effect such a result."

"O Helen! you are heartless!"

"Perhaps I am; but, if so, am worthless to any one but myself."

"You are the proudest woman I ever saw."

"I believe you have told me that before, Mr. Reid."

"Mr. Reid! I wish you would never 'mister' me again."

"I should miss you very much, then; for, in that case, you would be obliged to go where I could not see you."

"I doubt very much if you would miss me, even should you never see me again."

"Are you sick this morning, sir?"

"Yes, heartsick."

"Then you are not heartless, as you say I am: otherwise you could not be heartsick."

"O Helen, Helen! you will drive me wild."

"What ails you, Mr. Reid? I never saw you manifest such a spirit."

"And you will never see me manifest such a spirit again, Miss Harlow."

"I am glad to hear you say so."

"Of course, you are; and will be more so when you hear the why, I suppose."

"As to that, I can tell better when I hear it."



Reid sat for some time in silence. "Helen," said he at length, "I have been rude this morning, have been cross, and I know it; but I have come, for the last time, to ask you a question to which I felt so certain you would say 'No' that it angered me."

"Why ask it, then?"

"Because I must, I will: I shall ask it for this only time, remember; so take time to think before you reply. Helen, will you be my wife?"

"And this is the last time you will ask this question, Mr. Reid?"

"The very last time, Miss Harlow."

"I am glad to hear it."

"I expected you would be; but you have not answered me yet."

"I am glad to hear it," she continued, without noticing his last remark, "for two reasons: first, because it will save me the further pain of saying 'No' to one I respect too highly to willingly give him pain; and the other reason is, you would not be so positive that it is the last time, if your mind had not begun to turn toward some one else."

"But you have not said 'No' yet."

"Have I not told you, Mr. Reid, that I did not love you?"

"You have; but you said further, that you would not marry me if you did love me."

"And what did you infer from that?"

"Why, that you did love me a little, after all; and, being conscious of the fact, added that to make the 'No' seem strong, when it was not really so."

"O man! thy name is vanity," said Helen, smiling.



“Why add that last clause, then?”

“To show you how utterly impossible it was for me to grant your request. I said, in effect, I would not marry you under the circumstances, even if I loved you; but, as I do not love you, there can be no possible ground for you to hope.”

“And you still say the same?”

“I still say the same.”

“Well, you are Godlike in one respect, if in no other.”

“How is that?”

“There is no variableness nor shadow of turning about you. If the truth were known, I believe you love that” —

“Mr. Reid!”

“I know that I am a wretch, Helen, to refer to such a thing; but it makes me angry to see so much love and devotion thrown away.”

“You were just in accusing me of being heartless.”

“Well, I knew better than that. I am not myself this morning. But what makes you think that my mind is turning toward some one else, Helen?”

“Because you never loved me.”

“Helen!”

“It is true, sir, and you will find it out yet. You thought you did, and hate to acknowledge, even to yourself, that you have been mistaken; and that is what has made you so irritable, so unreasonable, this morning.”

Reid looked at her in astonishment. “Helen,” said he, “there is no woman on earth that I esteem as I do you.”



"And there is no one among all my acquaintance that I *esteem* more highly than I do you; but it is not of esteem that we are talking."

"Did I say esteem?"

"You did, sir; and it is the right word. You shake your head; but you will find that I am telling you the truth."

"Perhaps."

"You would not say 'perhaps' if you did not feel 'perhaps.' I tell you, William Reid, had I said 'Yes' to your request, you would have been disappointed, and not so happy as you imagine."

"I can not think you are right, Helen, for I know of no woman that I would as soon call 'wife' as you; but, since there has been so much said, I will own that there is one lady that I may try to win, as you give me no hope."

"But you will continue to *esteem* me as highly as ever?" asked Helen with a look of mock distress.

Reid looked annoyed. "Helen, you are too bad."

"Am I? What do you wish me to do? cry about it?"

He laughed in spite of himself. "It would do you no good if you did: it is too late to cry now."

"But not too late to attend your wedding; that is, if you *esteem* me enough to invite me."

"No, Helen, I shall never invite you to my wedding;" and there was a sadness in his tones which made her tremble for the happiness of the one he should marry.

"Well, be that as it may," she replied; "but be true to yourself, whatever you do."



“Not with your idea of being true ; for then I should spend the remainder of my days alone. But I shall only annoy you by further remark, and so farewell ;” and he was gone.

Gone, leaving Helen sadder than she had ever yet been at his departure. Not that she regretted her decision, or was sorry that the conflict between them was over. No, not that ; but the cross-purposes of life troubled her. Why was it ? Why should the carrying out of one’s purposes, one’s highest convictions of right, conflict with the dearest hopes of another ?

Beside, there was a something in Reid’s manner, as he left her, which made her feel that perhaps she had been unjust to him ; that possibly he had not been as much mistaken in his feelings toward her as she had tried to make him and herself believe. If so, would he ever be happy again ? If not, he certainly could not make another happy ; and thus two lives would be spoiled instead of one.

Perhaps her idea of but one true love was false, after all. She hoped that it was ; for then there would be hope that Reid could be happy with another. This thought threw her back into herself. Admitting this, could she not have been happy with another than the one who had so cruelly deceived her ? Was she not sacrificing herself, and another also, to a false idea, a chimera of the brain, a utopian resolution ? Was she not ministering to a morbid pride in thus boldly wearing the mantle of disgrace, when she might so easily cast it off ?

Never in all these years had she been so shaken as now ; and it was not until she thought of the words of



poor old Jane, that she could recover her equanimity. "Oh! if I could have had an example like yours before me, I would have dared all."

The remembrance of these words turned her mind from self, toward the multitudes who are thus constantly being crushed by that state of public sentiment which takes sides with the strong against the weak, with the wrong-doer against the wronged.

"Yes," said she, "I see it now: here is my work; and, if I faint under the cross, I shall show myself too weak to bear the weight of glory which clusters around the crown." And thus content came again to her tried spirit, and she went cheerfully onward in her chosen path.

A few months afterward, when she heard of Reid's marriage with a young and lovely woman every way worthy to be his wife, she rejoiced that it was so, and sent forth her prayers for their happiness, unmingled with a single regret; and so peacefully did her life glide onward, she forgot, at times, that it had ever been otherwise.

Still, she was ever busy, — ever striving to gather knowledge for herself and boy; knowing that the sunshine could not last always and that it

"Was not given for sleeping."





## CHAPTER XII.

## ANOTHER STORY.

“ Another unfortunate gone to her death.”



TAKE her into Helen Harlow's. It is the *fittest* place for her.”

Helen knew that voice, though she had not heard it for years, — the voice of the woman who called her boy's father husband. She looked out, and saw that a woman had fainted but a few feet from her door, — a woman who was still young, had been beautiful, but was now an outcast, — one of the pariahs of our Christian land. Near her stood Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Granger, and Mrs. Fitzhammer, impeded in their progress by this woman lying directly in their path.

Helen's was the nearest place to which she could be removed ; and these three women were urging those who were gathering around to carry her there.

“ Yes,” said Helen, “ bring her in ;” casting her eyes, at the same time, upon the trio : “ but don't let her touch their immaculate garments ; for she would probably never have been what she is but for some such men as their husbands.”

Mrs. Granger's eyes flashed fire. “ I presume that you know, if any one does,” she retorted.



"I know of one of them," Helen replied, with a concentration of tone that made her persecutor quail. It was the nearest that she had ever come to acknowledging the parentage of her child.

Mrs. Granger was white with anger. "Come," said she to her companions, as soon as she could speak for rage, — "come; let us no longer disgrace ourselves by being in the vicinity of such brazen-faced shamelessness."

In the mean time, the poor creature had been carried into the house, and placed upon Helen's comfortable lounge, while Helen herself was hastening to bathe the brow and temples of the unconscious form.

She started as the cooling liquid touched her, and murmured, "Mother!" and then, opening her eyes and seeing the strange face bending above her, groaned aloud. Helen motioned for the others to leave. "I will take care of her," said she; and those strong men went out from the presence of the heroic girl feeling more reverence for her than they would have cared to express.

Helen had often heard of this class of women, but had never before seen one that she knew to be such; and she felt her heart swelling with pity as she gazed upon the mournful-looking eyes and sunken cheeks. True, her knowledge of this one's condition, or, rather, character, was more instinctive than otherwise; for, aside from what she saw and felt, she had had no other indication than the scornful tone of Mrs. Granger, when suggesting that the woman should be taken into her house as a *fitting place*.

But, whatever else she was, she was a woman, — one



who had loved, suffered, and sunk, instead of riding in triumph upon the billows of sorrow ; and Helen, as I have said, felt an intense pity as she looked upon her.

Her present condition was the result of the combined effects of hunger and disease ; and it was evident that her days of earthly suffering were nearly at an end. Helen asked no questions, but, with the charity that "relieveth first," directed her efforts toward making the sufferer comfortable. One or two curiosity-seekers dropped in to take notes for the mart of gossip ; but were so quietly dismissed, that they were hardly aware of the fact, supposing that they had left of their own accord. The stranger submitted to every thing that was done, with a half-bewildered air, as though it was all a dream, from which she should presently awake ; and, after being bathed, and arrayed in clean garments, she sank into a sound slumber, from which she did not awake till the following morning.

"Poor thing ! let her sleep," thought Helen, as she gazed upon the emaciated features.

She awoke, at length, with a start. "Where am I ?" she asked, springing to a sitting position.

"Among friends," replied Helen.

"Friends ! I have none !" and then, clasping the thin hands, she shrieked, "O mother, mother ! why did you die and leave me ?"

"Hush !" said Helen, going to her, and placing her hand upon the throbbing temples. This burst of feeling ended in a flood of tears, and then she grew calmer.

"I dreamed," said she, "that my mother was here ;



and it seemed so real, that, when I awoke to find that it was but a dream, I felt as if I could not bear it." Then, after lying silent a while, she added, "Oh! I remember now. I fainted in the street, and you brought me in here. Yes, I fainted. You are Helen Harlow, are you not?"

"I am Helen Harlow."

"Well, then, I will tell you all. I fainted, but not so much from weakness, though I was weak, and very tired. Still, I should not have fainted, had I not met one that I had known in better days,—the sister of the man who deceived and forsook me."

"Will you tell me his name?" asked Helen.

"Yes: I said I would tell you all. It was Herbert Ward."

"Ella Ward's brother!" She did not say Mrs. Granger.

"Yes: her name is Granger now, I believe." Helen assented by a nod of the head, and the stranger continued: "We were poor, but of as good a family as the Wards. But I have not told you my name. It is Ransom,—Elda Ransom. My father, Judge Ransom, lived in Boston, and had once a comfortable fortune; but, losing it through the villainy of one he trusted, we were reduced to poverty; and this so affected him that he sickened and died. I believe that men sink under misfortune sooner than women, if they are called the stronger sex."

"But how did you become acquainted with the Wards?" asked Helen.

"They boarded with us,—Herbert and his sister. They were attending school in Boston; and, after



father's death, mother took a few boarders in order to sustain herself and keep me at school."

"Had you no brothers or sisters?"

"Not living. Mother had had five children, — three sons and one daughter beside myself; but these all died in early childhood: and oh that I had died too!" And there was another passionate fit of weeping.

Helen waited quietly till it had subsided, and then brought her back to the subject by saying, —

"Herbert and his sister boarded with you, then?"

"Yes: for nearly two years we were constant companions, and they both professed the warmest friendship. I was beautiful, so they told me, and Herbert professed to love me devotedly; and I more than loved, — I worshiped him.

"Ella, too, was my friend, till she began to fear that Herbert would marry me, and then she used all her influence against me. She told him that I did not love him, and had confessed as much to a schoolmate; but that I would marry him because he was rich, and could give my mother a home.

"He came to me with this accusation, driving me almost wild with his doubts, or with his pretended doubts; for I now believe them to have been only a pretense, for the purpose of bringing me more fully into his power. I cried and protested, — fool that I was! — and he finally professed to be satisfied. Things went on as before, for two or three weeks, when he again came to me with what he called evidence of my duplicity.

"He raved like a madman; said if he could not



trust me he could trust no one ; and that he did not care to live. He frightened me : I actually feared that he would take his own life. He swore that he would, unless he could have proof, that would settle the question beyond a doubt, that I loved him and him only.

“ ‘ But what can I do more than I have done ? ’ I asked.

“ He walked back and forth through the room for ten minutes, perhaps : it seemed an age to me. Finally he stopped in front of me. ‘ There is but one thing, Elda,’ said he, ‘ that will satisfy me ; and that I have no right to ask : and so I must leave you ; ’ and turned to leave the room.

“ ‘ Any thing, any thing ! ’ I shrieked, throwing myself before him ; ‘ for I can not live without you.’

“ ‘ Are you in earnest ? ’ he asked, taking my hands in his.

“ ‘ Certainly I am,’ I replied ; for I did not even then suspect what he would ask : he had always been so respectful, that I did not once imagine such a thing.

“ He caught me to his breast ; he rained kisses on cheeks, lip, neck, and bosom ; and between the bliss of having his love again, and the fear of — what, I hardly knew, I had no power to resist him. And the sequel, so far as he was concerned, needs not to be told.”

She did not look into Helen's face during this recital ; consequently did not see the tears that her story had brought to Helen's eyes.

“ Did his sister know aught of this ? ” asked Helen at length.

“ Not at first ; but she found it out by watching. I



shall never forget the day she came to me, with the fatal secret upon her lips. She heaped upon me every vile epithet that she could think of; said that I had tempted Herbert on purpose to induce him to marry me, but that she would not have the family so disgraced. She even threatened my life if I ever dared to mention his name in connection with any thing that might occur.

“She might have spared herself this, for I was too heart-broken to make even an effort to stem the tide that was bearing me to utter ruin. Well, to cut the story short, my baby died; my mother died, the world cast me off, and what was there for me but sin?”

“For a while, so long as my beauty remained, I was well dressed and well cared for. But, when this began to fade, I commenced going down, down, till here I am. The end is at hand, and I am glad of it.”

“But how came you here in this country-place?”

“I came to see you, Miss Harlow.

“Me?”

“Yes, you: with your quiet life here, you do not know how much your courage and perseverance is whispered abroad. You little dream how many sorrowing ones are saying, ‘Oh! if I had had but one such example before me, I, too, would have stemmed the tide.’”

“But all women who have once been deceived do not follow a life of shame.”

“I know that they do not; but what kind of a life do they have? One of sufferance. They go, the balance of their days, with drooping head and downcast eyes, acknowledging by every movement that they are



sinner above all others. If they will do this, — if, to use a homely but expressive phrase, — if they will eat humble-pie the rest of their lives, then Christians will receive them as a sort of mendicant upon their charity, who may possibly — that is, if they are humble enough — find a seat at last in heaven.”

“ You paint a strong picture, Miss Ransom.”

“ Please don’t.”

“ Don’t what? ”

“ Don’t call me by that name: it reminds me too vividly of happier days. Say Elda, if you will, but not Miss.”

“ I think that you are eating humble-pie now.”

“ If I am, you do not furnish nor exact it. But is my picture too highly colored? ”

“ I can not say that it is, Elda.”

“ Of course, you can not. She must either do this, or she must marry some one who is every way beneath her, *to cover up the disgrace*. Just as though a woman was made more pure by associating constantly with a mean man, because he is her husband! ”

“ It seems to me,” said Helen, “ that people have strange ideas of purity.”

“ That is what I think; but you are the only one, Miss Harlow, of the thousands that become the victims of man’s falsehood, — you are the only one I have ever heard of who would not accept the injustice meted out to you, who has demanded and received respect; received it upon your own terms too.

“ Now, this is what we want, what we must have, or the most of those who have been thus wronged will sink in spite of every thing. The law of sympathy is



strong, and human nature is proud. To be constantly surrounded by those who look down upon us is terrible ; and we naturally flee to those who are in a like or a worse condition than ourselves, as a sort of protection from this crushing sense of humiliation. If they would only give us a hope, a possibility, of full reinstatement, it would be different. But no : no matter how cruelly we have been deceived, no matter how aggravated the wrongs which have brought about the result, eternal disgrace is the verdict."

"Yes ; and will be, till woman herself repudiates that verdict, refuses to accept it either for herself or others," said Helen.

"And that is why, Miss Harlow, that I say you little realize the influence you are having. You have done this, and successfully ; have demonstrated the possibility : thus becoming the star of hope to many a breaking heart."

Helen wept ; but they were tears of joy. "God grant that it may prove so !" she said. "But there is much to be done yet. I have won the battle here, in my own home and its surroundings ; but let me once go forth into the world, and then see."

"You would have to contend for every inch of ground," replied Elda ; "but every inch that you gained, you would hold, — and not for yourself only, but for others. Please give me a glass of water : I am faint."

"You have talked too much for your strength," said Helen, as she hastened to comply with the request. "There, now lie and rest a while, and you will be better."



“I shall never be better,” murmured the pale lips, as she sank away into unconsciousness.

“Never in this world,” thought Helen, as she looked upon her. Disease had done its work. The temporary excitement over, and the feeble frame gave way utterly. She opened her eyes once, gasped the word, “Mother!” and, before Helen could summon assistance, she was gone.

Again the services of the Rev. Mr. Gordon were in requisition, and again there was a quiet funeral from Helen's door.

Mr. Gordon, whenever he called on Helen at Lakeside, or when he came, as he sometimes did, to take her to Glencove to spend the sabbath, — in either case he always brought Mrs. Gordon with him. She knew that this was done to avoid even the “appearance of evil;” but she knew, also, that, but for her position before the world, it would not be considered necessary; thus showing that even there she was still condemned.

This — not the fact itself, but that which it indicated — sometimes aroused a feeling of bitterness in her heart; consequently, she was better prepared to understand the feeling expressed by Elda than she otherwise could have been. So she did not wait till some future time, as she had in Jane's case, to tell Mr. Gordon the story of wrong, but related it that evening after the funeral.

“Now, are these things right?” she asked, when she had finished the recital.

“How can you ask such a question, Helen? You know they are not!” exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Gordon in the same breath.



“Why, then, do Christian people permit them, accept them, act from them?”

“We can not have things as we would in this wicked world; we can not control the multitude, for we have no authority over any but our own members,” said Mr. Gordon hesitatingly.

“Ah! but you do not control them. The influence of your teachings does not even result in a spirit of charity; for, as a body, church-members are more severe on such than are those of the outside world.”

“Of course, they naturally loathe *sin more*.”

“Why, then, not loathe it as much in a man as in a woman?”

Mr. Gordon did not reply, and Helen continued: “I read a story not long since, in which an artist seduces a young girl from her home, to be the companion of his travels. Soon after, he paints a picture called ‘The Magdalen,’ and sends it forth to the world to be the admiration of thousands as a work of art. The painting bore the face of this young girl. She loved him, — him only, him devotedly; and this was her reward.

“Finally, the mother-feeling awakes in her heart; and love for her unborn babe gives her the power to plead with him so eloquently, that she prevails, and he makes her his wife. A few months afterward, as he gazes upon that mother with her babe in her arms, he is so delighted, that he paints another picture, — ‘The Madonna;’ but the face of the mother, beaming with love as she gazes on her child, is the same as that which represented the ‘Magdalen,’ — the same woman, with no change but on his part. Now, what do these things



mean? Where is the remedy for them? How shall woman escape from this tyranny, this injustice?"

Mr. Gordon was about to reply; but she interrupted him with, "No, not now: don't answer me now. Take time to think, — to think long and deeply; and in the future this shall be one of the problems which we will discuss, — which I hope and pray we may solve satisfactorily."

"Amen," said both Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, more deeply moved than either of them had ever been before upon the same subject.

As to Helen's course with Elda Ransom, it could not well have been otherwise than the subject of a nine-days' talk; but, self-poised as she was, she cared as little for this as does the oak for the chattering of the crows in its branches.





## CHAPTER XIII.

## A DECENT WOMAN.

"Souls of so gross a mould, they know as much of purity as wallowing swine of cleanliness: how they will rave, if, on a robe of white, they find a single stain!" — L. W.



T was as Helen had said: she had conquered for herself respect at home, where she was known; but no sooner did she step beyond it than her battles must be fought again. Her boy had now reached an age when it was desirable that he should have better advantages than could be furnished at Lakeside; and so she concluded to send him away to school.

Previous to doing this, however, she gave him a history of his parentage, told him of the vow she had made before his birth, and of her hope that he would help to make that vow good.

If there was aught on earth that Charles Harlow worshiped, it was his mother. His eye kindled with indignation as he listened to her story; and, when she had finished, he threw his arms around her and exclaimed, "Dear mother, you shall never blush for your boy!"

Springville, the seat of a flourishing academy, lay about sixty miles to the north-east; and thither the most of the youths of the place were sent, where parents were able to give them the advantages of such



a school. Helen decided that Charles should go to this school for at least a couple of years ; but she would go with him, and see that he was well cared for, before she left him alone among strangers.

It was a hard task for her to make up her mind to let him go from her ; but, having once decided that it was best, she did not hesitate. He must leave her some time, that was certain ; and how could he successfully battle with the world, unless he learned to stand alone, to depend upon himself. He was now sixteen years of age, and it was time that he began to depend upon his own resources.

About half way between Lakeside and Springville was the public-house of Job Jenkins, or, rather, of Mrs. Job, for she really ruled both him and the house. Mrs. Job Jenkins was a character in her way, — really a good housekeeper, so far as cleanliness and thoroughness were concerned ; but she had a perfect hatred of every thing that she chose to call laziness or pride. Consequently, every thing about her had a sort of cast-iron stiffness : no rocking-chairs, no comfortable lounge ; she didn't believe in " sich nonsense."

Tall, angular, bony, with none of the sweetest of tempers : it was said that the contents of her husband's bar did not add any thing to its quality ; but we will not vouch for that. She gave her customers a good clean bed, however, and plenty of wholesome food ; so that, notwithstanding the drawback of her unprepossessing appearance and manner, they did quite a business in the way of keeping travelers.

Mrs. Jenkins would never wear any thing but the plainest of clothes, and as plainly made up as possible :



“she couldn’t see, for her part, what a decent woman wanted of sich gimcracks and flumididdles.” She hated a pretty woman, and had no confidence in men in general, and Job in particular. “They are so easily made fools of,” she said, “they all need some decent woman to take care of ’em, and keep ’em out of mischief.”

It was here that Helen stopped with her son for the night, when on her way to Springville. They were hardly seated at the table, when Mrs. Job was called out to wait upon another arrival. “Right in here, right in here, good folks: supper is jist on the table;” and she led the way, followed by Mr. and Mrs. Granger of Albright. They had been to Springville on a similar errand to that on which Helen was going, — to take their son there; and were now on their way home.

It was the first time that Helen and Granger had met in all these years. She was so calm, so self-possessed, that none but the closest observer could have noted the tokens of deeply-stirred feeling. But Granger’s confusion was only too evident. How he quailed before the clear eye of the woman he had wronged! and, as he quickly glanced from mother to son, how he longed to take that son by the hand and imprint a father’s kiss upon his brow!

Mrs. Granger drew haughtily back. “Thank you: I prefer to wait, to eating in such company.” Granger frowned, and Charles flushed at this open insult; but Helen gave no indication that she noticed it. Mrs. Granger was retiring toward the sitting-room, when the words, —

“Your father, my son,” arrested and brought her back.



“ You acknowledge it then, you shameless creature ! ” she fairly screamed ; and then, in the very next breath, “ It is false ; and you know it is ! ”

Mrs. Job looked from one to the other with a puzzled air, muttering to herself, “ Pretty doings these, in a decent woman’s house ! ”

Mrs. Granger turned upon her with “ Why do you keep such creatures in your house, then, if you are a decent woman ? ”

“ La, now ! you needn’t bite a body’s head off. What did I know about her, only that she come in the stage and stopped here. A decent woman is sure to be imposed on, if she don’t keep her eye-teeth skinned.”

“ Well, you know now. Look at her, will you ? That great boy calling her mother, and she not a married woman ! and not a single blush on her face, — the shameless creature ! ”

Mrs. Job was fairly aroused. “ Away with you ! ” she shouted, as Mr. Job, attracted by the noise, came peering in like a scared chicken, to see what the matter was.

“ Away with you, Job Jenkins ! It’s a good thing that you’ve got a decent woman to take care of you, or sich critters would have ruined you long ago.” And then, turning to Helen, “ What do you mean, imposin’ on a decent woman ? Just pick up your traps now, and leave.”

“ Certainly, certainly,” replied Helen. “ When I find myself in bad company, I always get out of it as soon as possible.”

This reply so irritated Mrs. Job, that, but for Granger’s interference, she would have dealt Helen a heavy blow.



"You need not interfere, sir," said Charles, stepping quickly forward: "I will protect my mother."

"I hope you will always be able to do it, my son," replied Granger.

"Job, Job! can't you protect your own lawful wife?" shrieked Mrs. Job, as she shook Granger's grasp from her arm.

"Hear him now," said Mrs. Granger, fairly choking with rage: "hear him call that creature's child his son; and that in the presence of his own wedded wife!"

"Helen," continued Granger, paying no attention to his wife's anger, "these two termagants shall not drive you from this house to-night."

"I prefer to go, Mr. Granger. Mrs. Granger, years ago, threatened the victim of her brother's lust, poor Elda Ransom, with death, if she dared to reveal his guilt; and she has attempted my life once: so I think that I shall be safer elsewhere."

"It is false, you shameless wretch!"

"I can bring proof, madam, that you tried to burn me in my bed."

"I simply wanted to smoke you and" —

"Ella!"

Mrs. Granger looked into her husband's face: there was an expression there that she had never seen before, and she dared not complete the sentence.

"Burn you out? certainly I would," said Mrs. Job; "and so would any decent woman. Let me catch my Job calling any other woman's brat his son, and I'll scratch her eyes out; and so would any decent woman."

"What's wantin'?" asked Job, peering in at the door.



"A horse and carriage, to take myself and son to Springville to-night," promptly responded Helen.

"Back with ye, ye sneak!" was Mrs. Job's loving reply.

"But you called me," said he, manifesting a disposition to stand his ground for once.

"And so I did; but, if ye can't cum when ye're wanted, ye needn't cum at all. A man never'll cum when a decent woman calls."

"Can I have a horse and carriage?" repeated Helen.

"No, yer can't. Tramp it afoot, as ye'll have to yet, when ye'r beauty's gone," said Mrs. Job, with a mocking leer.

"Yes, you can. Mr. Jenkins, have a conveyance made ready for this lady immediately," thundered Granger, in tones that poor Job was only too willing to obey, provided his better-half did not object too strongly.

"It'll cost a powerful sight," he put in deprecatingly. Job said this on purpose; for, if he could only get Mrs. Job's mind on the money part of the matter, she would say nothing further against Helen's having a conveyance to any point she wished.

The bait took: still, Mrs. Job would not give up too readily. "Who's goin' to drive, I'd jist like to know?" she said. "You needn't think ye'll git the chance, Job."

"I will drive, if there is no one else to go, — that is, with the lady's consent," said Granger.

"You!" exclaimed Mrs. Granger, bursting into hysterical sobs: "after all that I have done to keep up the credit of the family, you will offer to take that creature out there, — to have her son as an associate



for our Herbert ! Oh that I should live to see this day ! ”

“ You need not trouble yourself, madam. I shall not accept his services,” said Helen.

After a little delay, a driver was found ; and Mrs. Job’s eyes glistened as she saw the money counted out to pay for that night’s ride ; but still, she could not forbear remarking, “ Of course, such as she can have money when a decent woman can hardly git a decent dress to her back.”

On arriving at Springville, Helen first found a place where they could have both refreshment and rest ; after which, she sought the principal of the academy, in order to make the necessary arrangements for Charles’s entering the school.

“ Helen Harlow ! ” repeated Prof. Wright musingly. “ Were you educated a Quaker, madam ? ”

“ I was not,” she replied.

“ You are a widow, I presume ? ”

“ What has my domestic history to do with my son’s entering your school ? ” she asked.

“ Nothing ; nothing at all, madam,” said he deprecatingly, shrinking from the indignant flash in her eye. “ Still, we like to know something of the history of those we have under our care.”

“ You have a given sum for board, tuition, and incidentals ; do you not, sir ? ”

“ We do, madam.”

“ Certain rules and regulations which you expect your pupils to abide by, both as it pertains to the school, and in reference to their moral conduct ? ”

“ Most assuredly, madam.”



“If those terms are fully complied with, have you any further claims upon them, their parents, or their guardians?” continued Helen, with the most imperturbable coolness.

“Most certainly not, madam,” replied the professor, bowing low.

“Upon these conditions, then, I will leave my son here. I shall take care to fulfill my part of the contract; and, if he fails in the duties assigned to him, send him back to me, sir:” and, counting out the sum needed for the first term of schooling, she placed it upon the table beside him. He was about to transfer it to his pocket, when she said, —

“A receipt, sir, if you please.”

“A receipt!” he exclaimed in astonishment.

“A receipt, sir. Would you trust that sum of money with me without something to show in return?”

Without another word, the receipt was written and handed to her.

“And now,” said she, turning to Charles, “I have no fears for you, my son, except in one respect; and I think that love for your mother will make you strong even there.”

He understood her meaning, and replied, “For your sake, dear mother.”

For one moment the tears came into her eyes. She took both his hands in hers, looked at him steadily for some seconds: then, leaning forward, she pressed a kiss upon his high, open forehead, another upon cheek and lip; and, without another word, she was gone.

Prof. Wright was strongly impressed by this scene, it was so different from the most of the partings



he witnessed; and he felt, that, whatever of mystery there might be about this woman's life, her boy had been well taught, and would be an ornament to the school.

He wondered, however, in what respect it was that his mother feared for him: but he did not have to wait a great while before being enlightened; not, however, by any act on young Harlow's part, further than a manifestation of patience under provocation such as none but a noble nature could have borne.





## CHAPTER XIV.

## JUST AS I EXPECTED.

"The world is full of prophecies unthought of till the event occurs. We fire the train, unheeding the result, then murmur when it comes; as though the fates themselves had turned against us." — L. W.



HEAD that, will you," said Granger, tossing a letter into his wife's lap.

"Just as I expected," was her reply, as she glanced at the contents.

"Just what you ought to have expected when you filled Herbert's head with your infernal nonsense. If you had let the boy alone, he would have done well enough."

"Mr. Granger, you haven't a particle of pride about you. You would just as soon our son would make an associate of that creature's boy as not; but I have more regard for the family reputation, I can assure you."

"And a great deal it will add to the family reputation to have Herbert sent home in disgrace," replied Granger.

"But he shall not be: I will not submit to such an injustice."

"I don't see how you are going to help yourself, madam: if you put the devil into the boy's head, and he acts it out, I can see no other way for you than to accept the consequences."

"Perhaps so, sir; but I'll find some way to help my-



self: that creature's boy shall never triumph over my son, if I have to" —

"What? take his life, as you tried to his mother's?"

Mrs. Granger paled. "And she has told you that absurd story?" she said.

"She has told me nothing, only what you heard yourself, madam. I have known all about that little affair of yours for years; and Mr. Reid and myself have watched you too close to allow of its repetition; for we did not think that it would add to the family reputation to have one of its members dance upon the gallows for the benefit of the public."

Mrs. Granger very conveniently fainted. It was the best thing she could do under the circumstances. Her husband, however, did not seem alarmed in the least, but walked deliberately out of the room, leaving her to recover as best she could. Unfeeling, was he? Perhaps; and perhaps the faint was a feint. And remember, dear reader, that people are not likely to be as patient as saints, when reaping a crop of thistles, even though they have sown the seed themselves.

The letter was from Prof. Wright, requesting them to come for their son, as his conduct was such that he could not be permitted to remain in the school.

Mrs. Granger, true to the petty pride of her nature, as well as to gratify her spite toward Helen, had written to Herbert, charging him not to associate with a boy by the name of Harlow from Lakeside, as his mother was a bad woman who had never been married. Her idea was, that this fact, circulated amongst the boys, would cause them to annoy Charles, till he would be provoked into some overt act of impatience which would result in his expulsion from the school.



In this she was sadly mistaken ; and the cup she had prepared for another came home to herself. It was on this very point that Helen had especially guarded Charles.

She told him what he might expect from weak or thoughtless minds, and also from malicious ones. "And here," said she, "from the spirit in which you meet this difficulty, shall I found my hopes of your future. IF YOU CAN CONQUER HERE, YOU CAN CONQUER EVERY THING." And, week by week, her letters to him reiterated the same lesson ; consequently, he was prepared for the abuse to which he soon found himself subject.

But, armed with a mother's counsels and a mother's love, it failed to elicit one retort or one act that was to his disadvantage.

Still, he avoided the company of his tormentors when he could, and frequently spent his hours of recreation in the schoolroom. The professor noticed this, and determined to learn the cause. He remembered the words, "I have no fears for you, my son, except on one point" — felt that this fact had some connection with that point, whatever it was ; and so he watched and waited.

The school-building was so constructed, that, from one of the upper rooms, one could see and hear all that was passing in the playground without himself being seen. Sometimes this room was occupied by one of the teachers, and sometimes it was not ; but the boys did not know of its existence.

Hither the professor repaired, one day, just after the recitation-hour.



“Where is Harlow? Isn’t he coming out?” asked one of the better-disposed class of boys.

“Of course not: he’s afraid we will say something to him about his ma, — the bastard!” responded Granger.

“I say, Granger, it’s too bad, — the way you treat that boy,” said another of the group.

“If you wish to associate with such as he, I am sure I don’t care; but I sha’n’t. I should think more of him if he had spunk enough to say a word for himself,” was Granger’s sneering reply.

Prof. Wright was looked upon by many as a cold, hard man, strictly just and uniformly kind, but more from a sense of justice, from a desire to do right, than from any genial feelings of love for humanity. But he had a heart, and a warm one too, when it was once reached; and Charles Harlow, with his open, honest countenance, and his straightforward, respectful manner, had won upon him more deeply than his pupils generally did.

In a moment he realized the boy’s position, knew what the point was to which his mother had referred; and his heart went out with almost a father’s tenderness toward the brave youth who was fighting so manfully this the first battle of life. “I will put a stop to this,” said he to himself, as he descended to the school-room.

He found Charles sitting at his desk, with his face buried in his hands. He looked up as the professor entered, smiled, and, taking his book, went to studying.

“You work too hard, Mr. Harlow: you will break down if you go on in this manner,” said he, going forward, and taking the book from the boy’s hand. “And



there is no need for it, I am sure ; for there is not a pupil in school who can learn faster than you can. Come, now, go to the playground, where the rest are."

Charles looked as though he would rather not : nevertheless, he arose to his feet, and reached for his hat. "I know more than you think I do ; and I will stand your friend," said the professor, noticing his hesitation.

This remark brought the tears ; but, dashing them aside, he hastened from the room. The professor looked after him a moment, and then returned to his place of reconnoissance.

"Here comes mamma's boy. I wonder where his papa is?" were the first words that greeted his ears.

"Shame, shame, Granger!" said two or three voices in that half-earnest, half-wavering tone which only provokes to further demonstration.

"Will he tell us where his papa is?" continued Granger in the same insulting tones.

Charles walked directly up to where he was standing, and looked him squarely in the face. Herbert did not quite relish this, for the mean are always cowardly.

He stepped back a little, and said "None of your impudence, my lad!"

"You asked me about my father," replied Charles.

"I did, my man, and should be happy to learn something of that mythical personage."

"And you really wish me to tell you?" he continued.

"Of course I do : what are you waiting for?"

"Boys, you hear what he says," said Charles, turning to the crowd.

"What's the fool coming at?" exclaimed Herbert in a tone of derision.



"I wish to know positively if you would like to hear the name of my father; and, as you say you would, I will tell you. It is Edward Granger of Albright."

Had he been struck by a cannon-ball, Herbert Granger could not have been more completely stunned than he was by this announcement. He turned pale and red by turns, opened his lips as if to speak, then shut them again; and, but for the suppressed titter that ran through the group standing around, I do not know but he would have fainted. This aroused his anger; and, springing quickly forward, he dealt Charles a blow between the eyes which knocked him prostrate, with,—

"Take that, you lying son of a b—h!" and was about to spring upon him, without giving him a chance to rise, when he was caught by the arm and held back by some of the larger boys.

Charles arose, and quietly wiped the blood from his face; remarking, as he did so, "You only got what you asked for, sir."

"It's a lie, you brat of a b—h!" yelled Herbert, struggling to free himself from those who held him.

"It isn't a lie neither," said little Henry Sherwood. "They look so much alike, anybody might know they were brothers."

Henry was from Lakeside, and, knowing Charles, had sympathized with him all along; but, like a great many older people in similar circumstances, he had not the courage to say so till he saw that the tide was turning.

"That's so; that's so! They do look alike, and that's a fact," echoed half a dozen voices at once.

"Only Charles is the handsomest," continued Henry Sherwood.



Herbert was beside himself with rage. He tore himself free; and, catching up a heavy ball-club that was lying near, he was about to use it right and left, when the voice of Prof. Wright, asking, "Boys, what does this mean?" put a stop to further proceedings.

Herbert dropped his club and his head at the same time, while Charles looked boldly up. The professor smiled, as if to say, "All right, my boy;" while one of the older boys commenced giving an outline of the causes which had led to the disturbance.

But he was interrupted with "Never mind, Mr. Swain: I saw and heard it all. Mr. Granger, will you come with me?" Herbert followed with a quaking heart; while Charles, for the first time since Herbert's first letter from his mother after his arrival in Springville, — for the first time since then, enjoyed his hour with his school-fellows without being subjected to insult.

Prof. Wright led young Granger to his study, — the room facetiously called by the boys "the court-room." Placing him a chair, and seating himself in another, he asked in no very gentle tones, —

"And now, Mr. Granger, will you be good enough to tell me what all this means?"

Herbert's temper was up, and with it the pride of the Wards; still, he was a little afraid of the stern old man before him. "He insulted me," was the dogged reply, after a little hesitation.

"A little more respectful, if you please. How did he insult you?"

"I would rather not tell, sir."

"But I command you to tell, young man."

Herbert looked up. There was no relenting on that



stern face. "He spoke disrespectfully of my father, sir."

"What did he say?"

"He — I — I — I do not wish to tell you, sir."

"It is not as you wish, but as I wish."

"He — I will not tell: so there!" exclaimed Herbert in sheer desperation.

"You will not leave this room till you do," said the professor, rising, and turning the key in the lock, and then transferring it to his pocket. "Now, young man, I await your convenience. There are just ten minutes before the next recitation commences: if you tell me in that time, well; if not, you will be detained here for at least three hours, before you will have the opportunity;" and, taking his watch, he laid it down where Herbert could mark the time.

One, two, three minutes passed, and no sound was heard but the ticking of the little monitor; and another minute: and then, with a desperate effort, Herbert managed to say, "Harlow's mother was never married."

"Is he to blame for that?" asked the professor.

"But he told me that my father was his."

"What did you say to him that caused him to say it."

"My mother told me that I was not to associate with such as he."

"That is not answering my question, Mr. Granger."

"I — I told him I should like to know where his papa was."

"And then knocked him down for telling you."

"Mr. Wright!"

"Is it not so, young man?"



"But you do not, you can not believe that he told the truth, sir!"

"I do not know as to that, sir; but I can hardly think Mr. Harlow capable of telling what he does not believe to be true. And, according to your own statement, you insulted him. I have ample proof of this, even if you had attempted to falsify, which I am glad that you did not; for I heard every thing that was said. Go to your room now; and this evening I will settle this matter with you.

Herbert was only too glad to retire; but he spent the balance of the day in nursing his wrath, and writing a pitiful account of his wrongs to his mother, instead of cultivating a spirit that was likely to reconcile the difference between himself and the unyielding professor. Consequently, when he was required to apologize to Charles before the school, he positively refused to obey.

"Just as you can afford, Mr. Granger; but you will be expelled from the school if you do not."

"I have written to my mother, sir, and she will see that I have justice done ~~me~~," was the sullen reply. Prof. Wright turned and left him without another word; but went directly to his room, and wrote the letter to which we have referred in the commencement of this chapter.

Herbert's letter was already in Mrs. Granger's possession when the professor's letter reached Albright; but she had concealed the fact from her husband, hoping, by some means, to settle the difficulty without its coming to his knowledge. She well knew, that, if she had kept quiet herself, this would never have occurred: but, in her overweening pride, she had taken a



step that had made the parentage of Helen's son known to the whole school; and she inwardly cursed herself for the folly that had produced so undesirable a result.

In fact, she had overreached herself; and she knew it, but was far too proud to acknowledge it. All night long, the night previous, she had lain awake studying over the matter, trying to decide what course it was best to take to save the family reputation from further blight; and now she was confronted with this letter, requesting them to come and bring their son home.

What should be done? What would the people of Albright say if they knew the facts? They must not know it! But how could she prevent it? There were pupils at Springville not only from Albright, but from Lakeside, Glencove, and all the country round. There was no help for the matter, as she could see. The world would not only know that her husband was the father of Helen Harlow's child, — not only this, but that her own son had been expelled from the school in which the other was retained with honor.

It was a bitter cup for the proud woman; but she had prepared it, and she was obliged to drink it. She would have taken the lives of these she hated so intensely; but the failure of her first scheme, together with the so recent remarks of Granger, — these made her fear to attempt such a thing.

She went to Springville, had a stormy interview with the professor, making things worse instead of better; took her son, and placed him in another school, and then went home, saying, "It is just as I expected: the men are all alike. A creature like that is always favored."



"A creature like what?" asked Granger.

"You know well enough who I mean, sir. Not only such, but their children, born of shame, will find favor with the very best of men, when a child honestly born must stand aside. Oh the wickedness of this ungodly world!"

"Perhaps you had better turn saint, and go into a convent," said Granger.

"So that you could marry your mistress!" she retorted. "No, Edward Granger! my children shall never be disgraced like that. I would rise from my grave to prevent it."

"That is easier said than done," he replied; leaving the room at the same time, to avoid further conflict.





## CHAPTER XV.

## EMENDATORE.

"A bubbling spring lies at your feet: you heed it not. It sinks from sight, and, flowing underground, comes forth to meet more genial light elsewhere. You learn its fame; go look upon, then quaff its crystal waves, and wonder whence it came." — L. W.



HARLES HARLOW had no further trouble at Springville. The battle was fought, and the victory won, — a battle which called for greater courage than is needed on the tented field. The boy who can control himself needs fear nothing else. Boys instinctively recognize this, though slow to act upon it; but, when they see such a spirit manifested, they are sure to respect it. Granger, on the contrary, having provoked his own trouble, met with little sympathy, even from those who were the most ready to join with him when the tide was in his favor.

It is a hard lesson, but one that all must learn, soon or late, — that those who give the most boisterous demonstrations of approval are not likely to be the truest of friends. And it were well to understand the opposite also, — that those who are loudest in condemnation are not always our worst enemies.

As Charles is now pleasantly situated, — the first in his classes, and a favorite with both teacher and pupils, —



we will return to Lakeside for a while. Helen kept for sale, among other things, the popular periodicals and weeklies of the day. About this time there appeared, first in one of these, and then in another, an article signed "Emendatore," about which every one seemed running wild.

"Who is the writer?" "Is it a man's or a woman's style?" "What is the meaning of the signature?" &c., were the questions that flew from lip to lip.

"Miss Harlow, have you read the article in 'The Waverley' of this week, signed 'Emendatore'?"

"I have been so busy this week, that I have had but little time to read," was the quiet reply.

"Oh, but you ought to read that! It's perfectly splendid!" This from a young miss; and the next hour, perhaps, —

"Helen, have you read the article in last week's 'Ledger,' signed 'Emendatore'?" would be asked by some staid matron who "never read stories," but who had been persuaded to read this, "because everybody was talking about it."

"I have heard it spoken of, Mrs. Coburn, but do not get time to read as much as I would like."

"But you must take time to read this: it is well worth it, I can assure you. If all stories were like it, I should not object to them as I do."

The next week, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon call in, on their way to visit a friend in the country; and the first question after they are fairly seated is, "Helen, have you read the story in this week's 'Harper,' signed 'Emendatore'?"

"I just glanced at it, last evening, but was interrupted by a customer."



“ Well, you must read that, if you never read another thing of the kind,” said Mr. Gordon.

“ What do you think husband said when he first read it ? ” asked Mrs. Gordon.

“ I am sure I can not tell,” replied Helen. “ I am not good at guessing.”

“ Wife ! ” said Mr. Gordon, shaking his finger at her threateningly.

“ Oh ! I am not afraid of you, sir,” said she, laughing. “ Enforce your authority if you can.”

“ It is not of much use to try to enforce any thing in these degenerate days,” he replied, with assumed gravity.

“ But you have not told me what he said,” remarked Helen.

“ He said, that, if you ever did such things, he should think that you were ‘ Emendatore.’ ”

“ I am not at all surprised that he did not wish you to tell me that he had made so unreasonable a supposition.”

Mr. Gordon cast a searching look upon Helen, but read nothing ; and, turning away with an expression of disappointment upon his face, said to himself, “ It can not be ; but it is so like her.”

“ I told husband,” continued Mrs. Gordon, “ that you would laugh at him. But I should really like to know the author of that article.”

“ Authoress, you mean,” responded her husband.

“ I can’t see, for my part, Mr. Gordon, how you can think so ; for, certainly, it is not a woman’s style. It is too strong and vigorous.”

“ It is strong and vigorous, I will own, wife ; but it is



not masculine. None but a woman who had suffered and grown strong could have brought out those fine, delicate touches of feeling."

"I think I must read it myself," said Helen.

"Oh, do! and, when we return, we will hear your decision; for I am sure you will agree with me."

"Of course she will, wife," laughed Mr. Gordon.

"I do not think, under the circumstances, that I shall give you my decision, even if I conclude that I am capable of deciding: for if I agree with you, Mrs. Gordon, I shall bring down the concentrated wrath of your liege lord upon my devoted head; and if with him, there is danger of provoking you to jealousy."

"Just like a woman: politic enough to get out of a thing, if you do not wish to do it."

"I am a woman, Mr. Gordon; and why shouldn't I be just like one?" asked Helen very demurely.

"You are just like yourself, that is certain," replied he.

"I wish I knew who 'Emendatore' was," said the lady, "for"—

"If only for the purpose of learning whether man or woman, I presume," interrupted Mr. Gordon.

"I think," said Helen, "that it makes but little difference as to that. It is *what*, not *who*."

"True, true; but then one has some curiosity, you know."

"You mean, wife, that a woman has. Eve had, '*you know*.' But here comes Mrs. Sherwood."

Mrs. Sherwood's opinion of Helen has changed somewhat since we saw her last, and she is now one of her best friends. Henry had written to his mother an



account of the scene between Charles Harlow and Herbert Granger, at Springville. The secret of Charles's parentage was, therefore, no longer a secret at Lakeside ; and to say that Mrs. Sherwood was somewhat amused and very much gratified by the manner in which Charles had sustained himself would simply be speaking the truth.

“ Good-morning, Helen. Glad to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. What beautiful weather we are having ! ”

“ Very fine for the time of year. How is your family, Mrs. Sherwood ? ” replied Mr. Gordon.

“ Never better. But have you read the articles that have appeared recently, signed ‘ Emendatore,’ Mrs. Gordon ? ”

“ Just what we were talking about when you came in. Did you ever read any thing like them ? ”

“ I never did. How they go right home to one's heart ! I hope, if ever the writer publishes a book, that Helen will have them for sale ; for it would certainly pay her well. Have you any thing further from ‘ Emendatore,’ Helen ? ”

“ There is a short story in ‘ Harper ; ’ but I don't believe I have a copy left, Mrs. Sherwood.”

It was thus that “ Emendatore ” was everywhere received. But, though public expectation stood on tiptoe, the writer remained *incognito*, — the secret of identity impenetrable.

About six months after the above conversation, a clairvoyant who was interested in following up this question might have seen a woman in the office of a



Boston publisher, with a manuscript in hand, consulting with the head of the firm in reference to its publication in book-form.

"How much will you take for your manuscript?" asked the publisher.

"I do not wish to dispose of it, sir."

"It costs quite a sum, madam, to get a book fairly before the public, especially if the writer is unknown."

"I am aware of it, sir; but I prefer to publish upon my own responsibility. Then no one loses but myself, if it is a failure; and, if it is a success, I have the benefit of it."

"Under what name do you come before the public? — your own, or shall you use a *nom de plume*?"

"Emendatore."

"Emendatore!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet in his astonishment. "Are you the writer of the articles that have recently appeared under that signature?"

"I believe I am."

"And you will not sell your manuscript on any terms?"

"I should rather not."

That "rather not" meant much more than a positive refusal would have done from some; and the gentleman knew it: still, he did not like to give up the point. "I will pay you handsomely for it," he said.

The lady shook her head.

"I think you stand in the way of your own interest, madam."

"I shall not dispose of the manuscript upon any terms," she replied, finding that nothing but a positive refusal would do.



“Of course, I do not wish to urge you, and I have no doubt but your book will be a success: still, when publishers take the responsibility of a book, it has more weight with the reading-public than one which is put forth by individual enterprise, from the fact that the former are supposed to understand the merits of a work; whereas the latter are liable to be partial, — are less qualified to judge independently of what they desire to be true.”

“I acknowledge the justness of your remarks, sir, but prefer to venture alone.”

“I hope, then, madam, that you will permit us to be your publishers.”

“I shall have no objection to that, provided that you will do as well by me as I can do elsewhere.”

“Miss Harlow, have you seen the announcement?”

“To what announcement do you refer, Miss Mary?”

“‘Emendatore’s’ book. I want you to send for a copy for me.”

“Certainly I will.”

“I think, Miss Harlow, that you had better order several, while you are sending; for I know that you can sell them.”

“Perhaps, Miss Mary, the book may not be as good as the short articles are.”

“Yes, it is; for Mrs. Fitzhammer was up to Albright yesterday, and she says that Mr. Granger has a copy. He has just come home from Boston; and he brought it with him. Well, Mrs. Granger sat up till far into the night to finish it. She is in raptures over it; says that she would give any thing to be acquainted with the writer,”



"And what does Mr. Granger say?" asked Helen.

"They say he only laughs at her enthusiasm, and tells her that the writer, he presumes, does not look nor act so very different from other people."

"I presume they do not," said Helen with a smile.

"How can you say so, Miss Harlow? For my part, I think that they must be perfectly grand. How I should like to see a live author! But here comes Mrs. Fitzhammer herself."

It was a fact: the lawyer's wife, after all these years, had condescended to enter Helen Harlow's place of business. Helen bowed; but the lady took no notice of the salutation, but, in the tone of one ordering an inferior, said, "I wish you to order a half-dozen copies of a popular work recently published by Blank & Co., Boston. 'Emendatore' is the name of the author. The title of the book I have forgotten; but you will find a notice of it in the last 'Harper.'"

"I am about to order a supply, and you can have as many as you wish, madam," replied Helen.

"Why, Mrs. Fitzhammer, what do you want of so many?" asked Mary Holmes, opening her blue eyes wider than ever.

"Why, Miss Mary! you here? I did not see you. How is your mother?"

"She is well. But you did not tell me what you were going to do with so many copies of 'Emendatore's' book?"

"Don't you know, Puss, that the holidays are coming?"

"So they are. I didn't think of that; and, if I thought Santa Claus would remember me in that shape, I wouldn't send for one."



“Santa Claus will be pretty certain to remember you in some shape,” was Mrs. Fitzhammer’s flattering answer. “But, come; are you not going home? I shall pass right by your house, and shall be happy to have your company.”

“Oh, no! I can’t go yet. Mother said that I might stay till eleven o’clock with Miss Harlow; and it lacks more than an hour of that time.”

The lawyer’s wife looked sober, and was saying something about its not being proper for young girls to be standing around in shops, but was cut short with —

“I guess my mother knows what’s proper for me, Mrs. Fitzhammer.”

“Of course; of course she does, Miss Mary. I did not intend any reflection upon her. Give her my respects, will you? Good-morning.”

“The proud fool! How I hate her!” said young Miss America, as soon as she was out of hearing.

“You should not call names, nor hate any one, my dear,” said Helen mildly.

“But I do hate her, Miss Harlow. She thinks, because my father is rich, and can give her Fitzhammer of a husband plenty of business, that she must be very polite to me. But how did she treat you? I’ve got eyes, and can see how things go: and Mary Holmes knows who she likes, and who she don’t like; and Mary Holmes’s mother knows what is proper for her daughter, as well as Mrs. Fitz does.”

Helen tried to frown down this burst of “free speech;” but it was of no use, the indignant girl would have her say.

Helen turned, at this point, to wait upon customers,



and there was silence for a few minutes ; but, as soon as they were gone, the girl commenced again : “ Six copies of ‘ Emendatore’s ’ book ! How very grand, indeed ! Couldn’t remember the title, but you would find it in the last ‘ Harper ’ ! ”

“ Mary, hush ! ”

“ Yes, I will, Miss Harlow. But what is the title of that book ? I am like Mrs. Fitz : I have forgotten too.”

“ ‘ Trial and Triumph,’ isn’t it ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! that’s it. I’ll try and remember it now.”

Helen sent for a supply of the wonderful book ; and it had a large sale in that vicinity. But who was the author ? That was the question which remained unanswered.





## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE WICKEDNESS OF THE WICKED.

"If you bray a fool in a mortar with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." — BIBLE.



IF the idea of doing an evil act once takes possession of the human soul, it seems as if it was almost impossible to eradicate it, till experiment after experiment has demonstrated its utter folly. Mrs. Granger had never given up her purpose of injuring Helen in some way; and now, since the affair at Springville, which had resulted so disastrously to her hopes, that desire had been increased tenfold.

But how to proceed without being detected, — that was the question: a question that she found herself unable to solve; and, the more she pondered it, the more difficult it became. But persevering thought will bring its results here as well as elsewhere; and she finally fixed upon a plan that seemed feasible, — a plan by means of which she could injure her in her property, if not in her person; and she hoped to in both.

It seems incredible, almost, that a woman, one who stood well in society, was a wife and a mother, one who had listened all her life to the preached gospel, — it seems hard, I say, for the common masses of the



people to realize that such a one could be guilty of such deliberate wickedness. But Mrs. Granger's hatred to Helen and her boy amounted almost to monomania ; and when it is remembered that her ruling idea from childhood up had been family pride, and that Helen with her son was a living evidence against the immaculateness of its record, it will not be so much wondered at, and more especially if one comes to understand the psychological power of an idea, when it once gets control of the mind, — how all else must yield to its sway.

Mrs. Granger knew that Charles would be at home during the summer vacation. Albright was at least twenty miles from Lakeside : therefore, it was out of the question to think of going there and returning the same night. But some two and a half miles from Lakeside was what was called " Blueberry Mountain," — a place of resort for parties from a distance, who used to visit it during the berry season ; bringing a tent and cooking utensils, and stopping, perhaps, three or four days, — a kind of picnic, or summer recreation, the fruit serving more as an excuse to bring people together than any thing else.

Mrs. Granger resolved to join one of these parties, and, though so near Cousin Fitzhammer's, to stay upon the ground just for the novelty of the thing ; and, whatever might occur, who would suspect her of going through the woods down the side of the mountain, alone and on foot, for that distance ?

With the most diabolical perseverance she experimented for weeks, yes, months, with a slow match ; testing its certainty, and the length of time that might



be made to elapse between ignition and explosion, if a train of powder was properly laid. During this time, Ward, her second son, was heard frequently to complain how fast his powder disappeared ; but his mother only laughed at him, telling him that boys never realized how much powder and shot they wasted when they once became fascinated with a gun.

“ But, mother, it is not my shot ; that holds out well enough : but my powder is gone before I know it ; and father will think that I hunt all the time, I am afraid.”

“ Well, here is some money to get you some more powder ; and see that you take good care of it this time.”

Ward took the money, wondering at his mother's unusual generosity, and hastened away to make his purchase. This time he filled his powder-horn, and laid the rest away very carefully upon an upper shelf in the closet in his room. A few days afterward, his mother said to him, “ Ward, where did you put your powder ? ”

“ On the upper shelf in my room.”

“ Did you leave it in the paper ? ”

“ A part of it. Why ? ”

“ Come with me, and I will show you.”

He followed, as desired, and found a hole in his powder-paper, and nearly all the powder gone. “ What does this mean, mother ? ” he asked.

“ Don't you see,” she said, “ that this shelf goes back farther than the others, and that there is a hole in it leading down between the plastering and the outside of the building ? ”

“ So there is ; and it looks just as if it was made on purpose.”



"Nonsense, my son : I have only been making it a little larger, so as to put down some poison for the mice."

"It's the mice, then, that have been after my powder?"

"They have, probably, been gnawing the paper. They use old paper and rags, which they cut up with their teeth, to make their nests of."

"But, mother, I did not lay the paper there, but here in this corner."

"They dragged it there, I presume."

"But how could they do it without scattering the powder?"

"They didn't : I have cleaned it up."

"Well, I must say that they are cunning little wretches to turn that paper in such shape that one hole will just match the other, and let my powder all down behind the plastering. If they should take a notion to carry a match down there, they could blow us up."

Mrs. Granger laughed. "So they might, Ward : I did not think of that. Go and get me a cup of water ; and I will turn it down there, and spoil their fun by wetting the powder."

"Guess it wouldn't be much fun for them, any more than for us," said Ward, as he trudged away after the water.

"Ward," said she, on his return, "you need not say any thing to your father about this : for it might worry him ; and there is no danger."

Ward did not say any thing to his father about it : but he told the Irish girl in the kitchen, and she went to "the master" with it ; for "sure, and she wasn't going to stay there and be blowed to smithierins."



Granger asked his wife what it meant. "Only some of Ward's nonsense about some powder he spilled. I will go and pacify Margy;" and he thought nothing further of the matter then. But he remembered it afterward.

The time arrived for blueberry-parties, and Mrs. Granger declared her intention of going. She hadn't been since she was a girl; and she was going to try it this year, just for the fun of the thing. "I don't expect that you will want to go, Mr. Granger, and I don't ask it; but I shall go."

"A very polite way of telling me that you don't want me along, madam; but that makes no difference. If you don't get sick, I shall not care," he replied.

"And much you would care if I did, if I was only sick enough to die!" she retorted.

"So far as that is concerned, I would a little rather that my children would not be deprived of a mother just yet. It matters not as to myself," was his cool reply.

"Of course not, so long as that creature lives," she was about to say, but checked herself in time; for she did not wish to turn his thoughts in that direction just then. As though it needed her bitter words to make him think of Helen!

"Rather hard language from a man to his wife!" she said, as soon as she could command herself enough to speak calmly.

He looked up quickly, caught the expression of malignity upon her face, and said to himself, "There is mischief on foot somewhere." But he gave no answer.



After a few minutes' silence, she continued: "I would rather you would go too, Edward; but I had no idea that you would, if I asked you."

"Mischief!" said he again, to himself; but, aloud, "I can not, Mrs. Granger: I have business that will not permit of it."

Strange efforts at concealment will reveal themselves. The very attempt only draws attention to the fact that there is something hidden; and this once known, it is half discovered.

Tuesday morning opened clear and bright, and our party set out on their excursion in high spirits. Two nights they were to be out, and return on Thursday to Albright, with fruit enough to make their fortunes, as they laughingly said. They reached the mountain about the middle of the afternoon; and with pitching their tents, and gathering berries enough for their suppers, the time was employed till it was too late to do any thing further that night. Mrs. Granger had induced them to camp pretty well down toward the village; "For, if we get sick of the fun, we can get up and go to the public-house," she said.

This done, she had rambled about till she found the path which led directly thither, — the one followed by the children who came from Lakeside to gather the tempting fruit.

She made no further attempt the first night, but retired very early; saying that she wished to get well rested for the next day. It was little that she slept, however; for her mind was too much occupied with thoughts of the deed she meditated.

The following day waned slowly. Toward evening,



a party from Lakeside, Mrs. Fitzhammer amongst the number, visited them ; and that lady was urgent in her entreaties that " Cousin Ella should go and spend the night with her, instead of staying out there in that horrid place." But " Cousin Ella " only laughed at her, persistently refusing to comply with her request.

The sun set grandly ; and the stars shone as bright as though sin had never entered the hearts of men and women. The last of the party had retired, and were sleeping even more soundly than usual, from the effects of the day's fatigue, when a masked figure stole forth, and made its way swiftly toward the village.

In the mean time, Granger kept thinking of his wife's unusual mood ; and, the more he thought, the more troubled he became. Something was wrong somewhere, he was quite certain. All at once her close proximity to Helen flashed upon his mind, in connection with the former attempt to burn her out.

" My God ! " he exclaimed : " why did I not think of this before ? " and, saddling his best horse, he was soon on his way to Lakeside. It was about ten o'clock on the second night of Mrs. Granger's absence from Albright, that a solitary horseman dismounted near the now deserted house in which Mrs. Harlow had died. Leading the animal to the rear of the building, he made it fast to a post ; and, taking out his watch, he struck a match and looked at the hour.

" Too soon for her to commence operations yet. Perhaps she has no such intention ; but it will do no harm to watch." And, proceeding to the village, he concealed himself where he could watch the approaches to Helen Harlow's place of residence.



An hour or more had elapsed, when a figure so clothed that he could not tell whether it was a man's or a woman's approached stealthily. Granger's heart beat high; for it was he, as the reader must have already divined. Upon nearer approach, he perceived that the figure was masked. "Not so deeply masked but your deviltry is discerned," muttered he between his set teeth.

Still closer came the figure. It was now so hidden by the shadow of the building, that only its outlines could be seen. A window is tried, — one that leads into the kitchen; and it is not fastened. Up, up, very slowly, till it has reached the height of about six inches. "You are getting yourself into a nice trap," thought the watcher.

But no; the figure does not enter the window: it is fastened open, however, by placing a little stick under it. Something is thrown into the room, and then a line attached to some light fabric pushed in after it. The watcher is trembling in every limb with the intensity of his excitement; but he still restrained himself. This line was now carried along close to the side of the house for several feet, and ignited with a match.

"Devil!" muttered Granger to himself: "what an exchange I made when I married you instead of Helen!" For he had no doubt, by this time, as to the identity of the figure.

This done, the form walked perhaps twenty feet, in an unconcerned manner, away from the building, — far enough to enter the shadow of the next one, — and then made a quick movement as if about to run; but sprang suddenly back, threw up its hands, and uttered



a suppressed scream, with the words, "My God, Elda!" then, as if doubly frightened, it sped away with the swiftness of a deer. Granger, in the mean time, distinctly saw a figure in white glide along toward the raised window, and disappear directly under it.

"If I believed in ghosts, I should say that was one," was his inward comment; and then he proceeded to examine the train that had been laid. He extinguished the fire, gathered up the tarred line and put it into his pocket, but concluded to leave the balance of the preparation that had been made for the destruction of the building just as it was, that Helen might see for herself what had been done. Then he started for his horse; but he had not proceeded more than half the distance, when a sound like an explosion caused him to turn hastily back.

Mrs. Granger heard it too; and, notwithstanding her fright at seeing what she took to be Elda Ransom's ghost, she exulted in what she supposed to be the success of her plan. "Nothing strange," thought she, "that Elda Ransom's ghost should watch Helen Harlow's house. Like attracts like, it is said; and we know that such as she can not find rest in heaven, if Mr. Gordon did preach such a splendid sermon over her remains." But these reflections did not tend to check her speed in the least; for she could not feel that she was safe till back within her tent.

She reached it without interruption, and flattered herself that this time, at least, she had been successful. "I don't care what Mr. Granger or Mr. Reid may *think*: they have no proof."

A man who had failed in some undertaking once



said, "that if his forethoughts were as good as his afterthoughts, he could cheat the Devil;" and how certain it is, that, for want of the requisite knowledge, our "best-laid plans," either for good or evil, fail just at the point where we are the most anxious for success! Had Mrs. Granger carried out her plans twenty-four hours sooner, or had Helen been a little less tender-hearted, and refused to sit up at least half the night with Patrick Donahoe's sick child, things would have gone far more to the liking of that revengeful personage than they did.

Helen had taken Charles with her, intending to return about midnight or a little after. There was a little room off the kitchen, in which black Susan usually slept. Helen occupied the chamber over the kitchen. There were two beds in this chamber, with a half-partition between; and, when Charles was at home, he slept in one of these, and his mother in the other.

The package thrown into the window when it was first raised was powder, which had a slow match attached to it also; but it was prepared in such a manner that Granger had not discovered it. Indeed, he never thought of looking for more than one; for he had not imagined a diabolism that could thus plan to be doubly sure. Black Susan was lying on the lounge in the front shop, having gone there and lain down with no intention of remaining; but, sleep overtaking her, she was still there when the explosion took place. Consequently, there was no one injured personally, though there was considerable damage done to the house and furniture.

The package had been planned with all the cunning



of a fiend. Some three or four iron spikes were found scattered in different directions, — one passing up through the floor and lodging in Helen's bed ; another tearing its way into Susan's room ; and still another into the shop amongst the light material there.

"The Lord did it, that's sartain," said Susan.

"Did what, Susan ?"

"Sent Miss Helen and Master Charles away ; and made dis ole black body forget itsel', and go to sleep on Miss Helen's lounge. That am sure."

Helen and Charles were within a few feet of the house, on their way home from watching with the sick child, when the explosion took place ; consequently, were able to prevent the spread of the flames : otherwise, the house must have been consumed.

Granger, when he came in sight, saw both Helen and Charles moving about, and others upon the spot, ready to render whatever assistance was needed. Seeing this, he retired without making his presence known ; for he did not wish Helen to know of his being in the vicinity. But, instead of returning directly to Albright, as he had first intended, he took the path that led to the mountain.

He rode on till he came in sight of the place where the party from Albright were camped, and then dismounted for the purpose of reconnoitering. He had gone but a few steps when he saw his wife come from a thick cluster of bushes at the left, and enter the tent. He stopped short till she had disappeared within ; and then went directly to this clump of bushes, and began to search for the disguise she had worn an hour previous. He first struck a match, and glanced around



to see what he could discover ; and, finding a pine-knot filled with turpentine, he lit another match, and still another ; and finally succeeded in setting the knot on fire. With this he searched the place thoroughly, and was at length rewarded by finding what he sought.

It was now nearly two o'clock in the morning, and it would be impossible for him to reach Albright before the family were up. Reid was living some ten miles from Lakeside, and at least four miles from his direct route home ; but thither he resolved to go. He reached the place a little after daylight. Calling Reid up, for he had not yet risen, he told him all that had occurred, and asked his advice as to what course it was best to take.

" You can not expose her," said Reid, " because of your children."

" I know," said Granger, " that they must be saved this disgrace if possible ; but how can I continue to live in the same house with such a demon ? "

" It is a hard case, Ed, and I don't know what to advise," replied Reid thoughtfully.

" Have you seen Helen lately ? " asked Granger.

" Not very lately : why ? "

" Do you know any thing of the history of the girl who died there a year or two since ? "

" Elda Ransom, do you mean ? "

" Yes, that's the name ; " and Granger went on to relate the scene at Job Jenkins's : and Reid, in turn, told him Elda's story as he had heard it from Helen.

" Did you ever see her ? "

" Once, in Boston, some years since. A friend pointed her out to me upon the street."



“Describe her,” said Granger. Reid did so, adding, “She was very beautiful; and I remember feeling sad at the thought of one so lovely living such a life.”

“I don’t wonder she was frightened.”

Reid looked up inquiringly, and Granger related to him what he had seen. “The very person you have described: and I am certain she saw her; for, if I am not very much mistaken, Elda is the name she called as she started back.”

“I didn’t know as you believed in ghosts, Ed.”

“I can not help believing what I see,” said Granger, a little annoyed by Reid’s tone.

Reid made no reply to this; and Granger continued, “I don’t pretend to account for it. You may call it hallucination, or what you please; but I saw what I have told you, and no amount of ridicule or argument can convince me to the contrary.”

“I do not dispute your word,” said Reid; and then the conversation turned upon other topics. Granger tarried at Reid’s a while longer, and then rode to Albright, reaching his home about three hours before his wife did.

The explosion at Helen’s created great excitement in the place; and, before our tenters were fairly up, the news reached them. “Who did it?” “What was their object?” &c., &c., were the questions that flew from lip to lip.

“I am sure I do not know,” replied the boy who brought the news. “I was out this way after the cows; and, seeing your tent, I thought I would come and tell you.”

“Was any one hurt?” asked Mrs. Granger.



“No, ma'am : but it is the greatest wonder that there wasn't. If Miss Harlow had been at home, she must have been killed, sure.”

“Wasn't she at home ?” she asked, in a tone which indicated disappointment, in spite of herself. But the minds of the company were so occupied that no one noticed it except the boy ; and he, in speaking of it afterward, said, “The woman acted just as if she was sorry that Miss Harlow wasn't there.”

“No, ma'am : she and Mister Charles were down at Irish Pat's, looking after their sick child.”

“Was the house very much damaged ?” she asked again.

“No, ma'am ; at least, not very much : but it would have burnt up, only Miss Harlow and Charles were just coming home, and they put out the fire.”

“Strange how things turn out !” thought she to herself ; and then aloud, “How fortunate ! It would have been a pity to have had her property destroyed. Let her get an honest living if she can.”

“But she would not have lost any thing,” said the lad, looking up quickly. “It was all insured ; for I heard my father say so.”

Mrs. Granger went back into the tent ; and I will leave the reader to judge if her feelings were to be envied.

Mr. Granger was not at the house when his wife reached home. “Where is your father ?” she asked of Ward.

“He is out at the barn, I believe : he has just got home.”

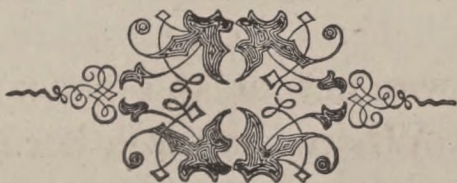
“Just got home ! Where has he been ?” she asked, a great fear creeping into her mind.



“I don’t know. He went away yesterday, a while before night, and did not return till this afternoon.”

Mrs. Granger turned, and went to her room ; and the first object that confronted her was the disguise she had worn the night before. She stared at the bundle a moment, as if to convince her own senses, and then fell prostrate, — *really* fainted, for the first time in her life.

When she had divested herself of her mask and outer garments, before entering the tent, she had hidden them in the place she had previously selected, with the intention of getting them again the next day, and destroying them. But, finding it difficult to get away from the rest of the party long enough for that purpose, she had concluded to leave them where they were. The mountain was full of people from all parts of the country ; and, if they were found, no one would think of her putting them there. But to find them at home, and in her own room, was more than she was prepared for.





## CHAPTER XVII.

## WAR. — A DISCOVERY.

“ When, 'neath the dews of peace,  
The clusters grow and ripen :  
When of the coming war  
Rumors are heard to frighten ;  
Or when, 'mid clashing steel,  
The winepress, trod by love alone,  
Reaches the bridle-bits in blood, —  
Not then, not then the end.  
The final triumph is not yet ;  
For it shall bring a world redeemed  
To deck love's jeweled crown.”

LOVE'S TRIUMPH. — L. W.



HE second year of Charles Harlow's term at school passed even more pleasantly than the first ; and, at its close, Helen was desirous that he should enter college. But he said, “ No, mother : I do not wish to spend years in studying dead languages, when there is so much in the living present to occupy the mind and heart. Let those who desire to enter the learned professions occupy that field : I do not wish to.”

“ What would you like to be, my son ? ” she asked.

“ I would like to be an architect, if you please.”

Helen thought a while. “ It is not what I would choose for you ; but you will do better in a pursuit which you like than you can in any thing else.”

“ You give your consent, then, mother ? ”



“Yes, my son : be an architect if you like.”

“Thank you, thank you, dear mother. Prof. Wright says that one had better be a good ditcher than a poor lawyer ; and I am sure that one can attain to eminence as an architect if he chooses.” And so the question was settled ; and Charles Harlow, or, more truly, Charles Edson Granger, went to work with a will to perfect himself in the calling he had chosen.

Four years passed quickly away ; and, at the age of twenty-two, Charles E. Harlow’s name was one to command respect wherever it was known. A fine, manly form ; clear, blue eye ; high, open forehead ; health, strength, intellect ; an unblemished reputation, and excelling in whatever he undertook, — what more could any mother ask for her son ?

There was no happier, prouder mother in Lakeside than Helen Harlow. The words of Isaiah, “Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,” had been fulfilled in her case ; and she sometimes read the fifty-fourth chapter of that prophet, feeling as though it belonged especially to her.

But triumph, in this world of change, is the twin-brother of trial. Not only the calm of national, but that of private life, was broken by the shrill tocsin of war ; and, hearing it, the brave sprang with alacrity to arms. A blow had been struck at Sumter, and hundreds of thousands echoed the fierce defiance.

Charles Harlow obtained a captain’s commission, and enlisted a full company from the youths of Lakeside and vicinity, without the least difficulty, — an entire company made up of those of the ages from eighteen to twenty-five, and not a married man amongst them.



The ladies of the place, in the mean time, prepared a fine flag to be presented to the company on the day of their departure; and Helen, as mother of the captain, was chosen to give the presentation speech. The people had assembled to take their farewell look of brothers and sons. Fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers choked back their emotions, and strove to be brave, as Helen stepped forth, with one hand resting upon the flag, and the other upon her breast, and, raising her eyes to heaven, gave a short, appropriate, but unexpected invocation, and then, with a straightforward, common-sense speech, gave the flag into the keeping of the company.

When she first stepped forth, a stranger, who was standing not far from Reid and his wife, started forward, and, gazing intently for a few moments, said, loud enough to be heard by those about him, —

“I am not mistaken : it’s the same.”

When the presentation was over, this stranger stepped forth, and called the attention of the people. “Friends,” said he, “I have a surprise in store for you, — one that will make this day long to be remembered by the citizens of Lakeside. I shall make no apology to the one whose incognito I am about to reveal; for she has kept it a secret long enough, and the place of her residence has a right to the honor thereof. In the lady who has presented the flag, behold ‘Emendatore’!”

There was a short silence, till the people could fully take in the meaning of what had been said; and then the shout which filled the air caused Helen to retire, covered with the sweet confusion which comes of conscious appreciation.

“Is it possible?” “Who would have thought it?”



“I wonder we did not think of it before: it is so like her!” These and similar remarks flew from lip to lip as the company separated.

“How did you learn that Miss Harlow was ‘Emendatore’?” asked Reid of the stranger.

The gentleman looked up as if he had not heard aright; and Mr. Reid repeated his question.

“*Miss Harlow!* I thought she was Capt. Harlow’s mother?”

“So she is, sir; and has made herself respected, in spite of her early misfortune.”

“Ah!” was the involuntary ejaculation; and then, as if recollecting himself, “You asked me how I learned that she was ‘Emendatore.’ I saw her in Boston something over four years since, in the office of Blank & Co.’s publishing-house; and hers is a face that, once seen, is not easily forgotten. I could not learn who she was, nor where she lived; but, when she arose to present that flag, I recognized her immediately.”

“But how did you know, sir, that we were ignorant of the fact that she was ‘Emendatore’?” continued Reid.

“I found a copy of her work at Mrs. Sherwood’s; and we were talking about it only last evening. I told aunt that I had seen the writer, and when, and where; and she said that she would give any thing to know her.”

Here the lady in question came elbowing her way through the crowd, with, “O James! I am so surprised! And yet I might have known it: it is just like Helen.”

“Mr. Reid, how do you do? My nephew, Mr. Howard, from Boston, Mr. Reid.”

“What would you give, aunt, to know ‘Emendatore’?” replied that gentleman, laughing heartily.



“ A prophet is not without honor ” —

“ Till you know who they are, aunt,” interrupted Mr. Howard; and, for answer, Mrs. Sherwood shook her finger at him with, —

“ You naughty boy, to interrupt your old aunt in that manner ! ”

They had drawn a little apart from the crowd; and, as Reid looked up, he turned to his wife with “ Did you know that Granger was here ? ”

“ No : where is he ? ”

“ Coming this way : there, don't you see him ? ”

The party exchanged glances, and looked toward Helen. The stranger noticed this, and turned to see the new comer. It was all clear : the resemblance between him and the young captain was sufficiently plain to show their relationship.

“ Why, Ed, this is a surprise ! ” exclaimed Reid, grasping Granger's hand as he came up. “ Mr. Howard, Mr. Granger. By the way, surprises seem to be the order of the day : we have just learned who the author of ‘ Trial and Triumph ’ is.”

“ Indeed ! ” was Granger's only response.

Reid, somewhat surprised at his tone, gave him a questioning look, and asked, “ Do you know ? ”

“ I have known all along,” was the reply.

“ You have ! ”

“ Yes : there are passages in it that but one person could have written.” Reid made no response to this; and Granger, with the manner of one who felt that it was good to make an acknowledgment, continued, —

“ She has made her vow good, Reid. ‘ Emendatore ’ stands higher than I do; and Herbert enlisted yesterday



as a private, while Charles is captain of a company who are proud of their leader.”

“This war will try many a poor fellow’s mettle,” said Reid, wishing to change the subject.

“Yes; and, were it not for my children, I should be only too glad to make my life of use to my country by losing it on the field of battle,” replied Granger.

“Poh, poh! you are blue, Ed. It’s nonsense to talk in that way.”

For reply, Granger turned and walked directly to where Charles was standing surrounded by friends, and, extending his hand, said, “My son, will you take your father’s hand and a father’s blessing?”

“Certainly, father,” he replied, taking the proffered hand, though his looks showed some surprise.

“God bless you for that, my son,” continued Granger, his emotion almost depriving him of the power of utterance. “And now,” he added, “if I never look upon your face again, I shall at least have the comfort of knowing that you think of me without bitterness. I would ask your forgiveness for the great wrong I have done you and your best of mothers; but it would look like mockery in this your hour of triumph. Beside, I have wronged myself more.”

Then, turning to the company, he said, loud enough for all to hear, “Boys, whatever else you do, heed the advice of one who knows of its bitterness, and never, never deceive the woman who loves and trusts you.”

Helen was standing at a little distance, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Gordon and other friends. She could not well help hearing all that was said; but the



firmly-set lips and the pallor round the mouth showed that she felt keenly, though she did not even look toward the speaker.

Neither did Granger even glance toward her; but, after his speech to the boys, he mounted his horse and rode rapidly away.

"Poor fellow!" said Reid: "his life has been a sad mistake."

"What a fool!" said Mrs. Fitzhammer to her husband. "From my heart I pity Cousin Ella."

"So do I," answered Reid; for the lady had spoken loudly, on purpose for his ears: "so do I; but not for any thing that Granger has done."

He was rewarded for this speech by a "well-bred stare," or "a *blank stare*," as he afterward said, as he referred derisively to "Noodle's glance of annihilation."

Mrs. Grant was really horrified. "She couldn't see what this world was coming to;" but, with these exceptions, every one present sympathized with Helen, and was proud of her success.

But, in the midst of life, the change called death overtakes us, and triumph only strengthens the soul for mightier struggles. Helen had educated her boy, trained him both morally and intellectually to honorable manhood; and she had maintained her own self-respect in such a manner as to be, by her example, a blessing to the unfortunate of her own sex: but now that son was going from her, not to the peaceful avocations of life, but to fields where death held high carnival.

Would he return unharmed? Should she ever look



upon his face again? These were the questions that would torture her when waking, while, during the hours of sleep, horrid visions of mangled limbs and dyings groans came to haunt her.

She bore it a few months, and then the little shop was closed; while another name was added to the grand army of nurses, who, though not half as well remunerated, did more than doctor or priest in saving the lives of our brave boys.

“I was not brave enough,” she wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, “to stay at home and bear the terrible suspense of such weary days: I must have the excitement which fills both hands and heart, or I should die. God pity those who are forced to live a life of inactive waiting! for they are the bravest of the brave, the real sufferers, the greatest heroes of all.”

“But I am gathering materials, Mr. Gordon, that will help me to decide some of those questions of vital import, of which we have several times spoken, still deferring their discussion to some future period. And when sweet peace broods over us again, if we are both spared, I think that I shall be ready for the question.”





## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A BROKEN SPIRIT. — DEATH.

“There is a repentance not to be repented of; and there is a repentance which wounds to slay.”



THE noise of Mrs. Granger's fall brought Margy, the Irish girl, to the door; but the white face of her mistress had less terror for her than “the horrid-looking thing, — the Div'l's own face,” upon the bed; and, crossing herself, with a “Howly St. Patrick!” she ran screaming out of the house.

Her outcries, coupled with the children's, soon brought Mr. Granger to the scene of action.

“What is the matter, Margy?” he asked.

“An' shure, yer honor, it's the Div'l's own sel' that's in the mistress's room; and he has kilt her intirely,” she replied.

“Nonsense! it's only a mask. I thought she had sense enough not to be frightened at it,” said he, as he made his way toward the room.

“And is it yersel' that's put the horrid thing there, ye wicked man?” said Margy, her terror changing to indignation.

He quieted the children by telling them there was nothing to be frightened at; then entered the room



where Mrs. Granger was lying, and, closing the door behind him, turned the key in the lock.

“I’m not so shure of it, indade,” muttered the girl, shaking her head, as he disappeared through the door.

Mrs. Granger had partially recovered; but, at the sight of her husband, she sank away again. He looked at her with a stern, hard expression upon his features, quietly removed the offending bundle, together with the mask, from sight, and then, lifting the prostrate woman, placed her upon the bed. The movement caused her to open her eyes; but she closed them again with a long, shuddering sigh.

He left her, and, going to the kitchen, said, “Margy, make your mistress a good cup of tea, and keep the children from the room. She is tired out with her long ride.”

“Indade, an’ I’d think she would be, trampin’ them hills like a hathen,” responded the girl, as she turned to do as she was bid.

This done, he returned to the room. Mrs. Granger had fully recovered her consciousness, but was lying where he had left her. She turned her eyes upon him with a half-entreating, half-defiant look.

“Did you suppose, madam, that we had watched you so long to be cheated at last?”

“We?” she questioned, starting up.

“Yes, Reid and myself.”

She sank back upon her pillow in silence: but hers was a brave spirit, — one worthy of a better cause; and she would not so readily yield. “Which one was it,” thought she, “that watched this time?” Deciding that it was Granger, she said, —



“It is an easy thing for you to divide the responsibility with Reid ; but you know, sir, why you were there, and what I have borne for years ; and ” —

“Ella !” He uttered this single word in tones that made her quail ; but still she would not yield.

“If I have been driven to desperation, could the public know all, they would not blame me.”

“You will have a chance to test the sympathy of the public, madam, unless you manifest a different spirit from this.”

“And what do you suppose people would think of your being there at the midnight hour?”

“I do not care what they would think, madam. I followed the channel of public opinion once to my sorrow.”

She looked up as if not quite comprehending him.

“That which winks at the crime of deceiving and forsaking a young and trusting girl,” he continued.

“Fudge ! A woman who can not take care of herself ought to sink.”

“But you see that she has not ; that she has triumphed in spite of you and me both.”

“A great deal you have done to prevent it !” said she bitterly.

“I took the first step ; and you have done the rest, or have tried to.”

“Why did you not marry her ? I wish you had.”

“Because of public opinion, as I have told you ; and it is the very sentiment you have just uttered, Ella, which has made your trouble, and mine too.”

“To what sentiment do you refer ?” she asked, forgetful of what she had just said.



“That a woman who can not take care of herself ought to sink.”

“I don’t see what that has had to do with it.

“Simply this: it is a tacit license for men to do their utmost toward ruining woman. Acting under the sanction of this perverted sentiment, I first won Helen, — won her when she was a mere child as yet; and then cast her off *because* it is considered a *disgrace to a man* to marry one who has yielded all.”

“But what has that to do with me?”

“Simply this, Ella: I married you, loving her; and, feeling this, you have hated her intensely, — hated her only as one woman can hate another. I had no right to marry you, not loving you. I perjured myself at the altar, and did you an irreparable wrong; for, had I not done so, you might have found some one that you could have been happy with.”

There was something in all this so different from what she had expected, that she did not know how to reply. It called up the time when she had known what it was to love, — when she was not quite the heartless woman of the world as when pride had led her to accept the handsome and talented Mr. Granger; and she began to weep.

“Tears will do no good,” said he, resuming the sternness that he had unconsciously dropped while dwelling upon the past. “You did not love me any more than I did you: so we are even there. Still, you might have found some one that you did love, had I not tempted your love of distinction by offering myself.

“This thought, together with regard for my children, will keep me silent, provided you never make another



attempt of the kind ; but, madam, you and I can never live together again as husband and wife."

She started to her feet. "A great deal you care for the children, to disgrace them in such a manner!" she exclaimed.

"There need be no disgrace, Mrs. Granger," — how he shrank from giving her that title! — "there need be no disgrace. Before the public, you will still hold the position that you have hitherto. We will have a second bed put up in this room, and the children themselves need not necessarily understand the real state of things. But you madam, will understand it, will remember that I shall suffer no word of dictation or blame, in any manner whatever;" and, with these words, he left her to her own thoughts.

As he passed from the room, he found Margy at the door. "It seems to me," said he, "that you have been a long time in doing what I told you."

"Indade, sir, an' it's all ready; but I was waitin' for yersel' to come out: didn't think 'twas manners to go before."

"Well, hurry along now, then." The fact was, Margy had been listening; and she muttered to herself, as she hurried away, "Guess I'd live wid a man that wouldn't slape wid me! indade, an' indade!"

Mrs. Granger had sustained herself as well as she could in her husband's presence; but, as soon as he was gone, her spirits fell to the zero point. What was there left to her now but submission to fate? and, to one of her disposition, this was like a living death.

"Go away, Margy," she said, as the girl entered the room with a cup of tea and a nice piece of toast. "I can not eat now: I am sick."



“Shure, and the master told me to bring it,” replied Margy in an injured tone.

“All right, Margy ; but I can not eat any thing at present. You can have it yourself, if you like.”

“Quare doings here, indade, an’ indade ! master scarin’ mistress with them outlandish fixins, and scoldin’ her till death mostly, an’ then orderin’ good things for her that she can’t tech, poor thing ! I’m thinkin’ that Margy M’Pherson had better be gettin’ out’n this. I’ll ask the praste about it, ennyhow.” So saying, the girl sat down with a hearty relish to her toast and tea.

From this time forth, Mrs. Granger was a changed woman. She seldom went into company ; and, when she did, the life and vivacity of other days was gone ; and at home there was the listlessness of defeat in every movement. People wondered for a while, and made various surmises as to the cause ; but, finding no solution to their queries, they were soon forgotten in some new excitement.

Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Fitzhammer were still her friends ; but they tried in vain to penetrate the secret of her condition. The doctors said “that she was going into a decline,” because they did not know what else to say ; and, finally, it became the settled conviction of the people, that Mrs. Granger would never be any better. As her ill health dated from that trip on the mountain, it was sagely concluded that she had overdone and caught cold at that time.

“Overdone ;” and so she had, but in a way they little dreamed of. At times the old spirit would flash up ; and then the struggle within would give her a wildness of manner that caused people to hint at “mental aberration.”



tion." "It was not an unusual thing," the old ladies said, "for one in her state of health to be deranged at times. And, besides, it ran in the family: her great grandfather's brother, Major Ward, had died insane."

Thus people accounted for things in their own way, and were left to their own conclusions.

She had continued to sink from year to year; and, when the war broke out, her condition was such that she seldom left her room.

Herbert's course at school had not been the most creditable one; and, when his mother was told that he had enlisted as a private, she only said, "Just like his father; not a particle of pride about him: a Ward would have gone as an officer, or not at all."

Mrs. Fitzhammer and Mrs. Grant, shocked as they had been at the course taken by Granger on the day of the flag presentation, could not rest till they had laid the whole matter before his wife. They forgot the condition of the sick woman, in their desire to create a sensation; so, on the next day, they made their way to Albright.

"How do you do, my dear cousin?" said Mrs. Fitzhammer, in that peculiarly pitying tone which is so offensive to a proud spirit.

Mrs. Granger's eyes flashed, but the emotion went no further. "About as usual, I believe," she replied, in even apathetic tones.

"And—what do you think?" continued this female tormentor. "Oh! I shall never take any interest in a story after this."

"I should laugh to see you lose your interest in fiction," said Mrs. Granger, with something of her old manner.



“ Oh ! but you won’t, Cousin Ella, when I have told you all ; for I shall always be thinking what kind of characters it is that write them. Only think of the hypocrite keeping it to herself so long ! ”

“ I always told you so,” said Mrs. Grant. “ She can hide any thing if she undertakes to ; but she can’t make a fool of me.”

“ No ; for the Lord has got the start of her,” said Granger in an under-tone, hearing the remark as he passed the window.

“ What do you mean ? ” asked Mrs. Granger, looking from one to the other.

“ Don’t let the news shock you too much, my dear friend,” said Mrs. Grant ; “ but we have learned positively that that creature, Helen Harlow, is ‘ Emendatore.’ ”

Mrs. Granger sank back upon her pillow without a word ; but the new Irish girl, who came into the room at that moment, opened her eyes very wide ; and, as she went out again, she was heard to say, —

“ Mend-a-tore ; an’ shure, it’s a quare name for a Christian woman ! ”

All three heard it ; and Mrs. Granger smiled in spite of the sadness which oppressed her, while Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Fitzhammer laughed till they could scarcely breathe. “ Not so bad, after all,” said Mrs. Grant, as soon as she could speak. “ She tore her reputation years ago, and has been trying to mend it ever since.”

At this, “ Noodle,” as Granger called her, went off again in another perfect paroxysm of laughter.

“ Come, Add, don’t kill yourself,” said Mrs. Granger at length.



This brought the lady back to a condition of sobriety. For a few minutes there was silence ; and then Mrs. Grant, with a long drawn-sigh, resumed the conversation.

“ But I have not told you all the news, my dear friend ; neither would I, but I think you ought to know. Oh, dear ! this is a wicked world ! ”

Mrs. Granger opened her eyes with a show of interest, and Mrs. Grant continued. “ Your husband, my dear friend, was at Lakeside yesterday ; and what do you think he did ? I should die, I know I should, if it was my husband. He actually called Charles Harlow his son before all the people. ”

“ He did ! ” shrieked Mrs. Granger, starting to her feet.

“ Don't, don't, Ella ! don't take it so hard : you will make yourself sick, ” said Mrs. Fitzhammer.

“ It's enough to make anybody feel, ” said Mrs. Grant. “ And their gathering around that fellow, and calling him ‘ Captain ’ all so grand ! ”

“ Calling who ‘ Captain ’ ? ” asked Mrs. Granger.

“ Why, Charles Harlow. He has raised a company, got a captain's commission, and is off to the war. But the Lakeside folks, — fools I had liked to have called them, only it would not be right, you know, — well, the ladies of Lakeside, they gave the company a splendid flag, and chose Helen, as the captain's mother, to present it. ”

The thought of her own son enlisting as a private came up in contrast with what she had just heard ; and the tortured woman sank back with a groan.

“ Don't, now, ” said Mrs. Grant : “ don't fret. You



will kill yourself, poor dear, and then what will become of your children ? ”

“ No, I will not die : I will throw off this incubus that has held me so long, and live to torment him. He would be only too glad to bury me, that he might marry that creature ; but he never shall ! ” And Mrs. Granger arose from her bed, and, dressing herself with care, went to the table that evening, the first time for months.

Mr. Granger looked at her inquiringly as she came in, bowed to the ladies, and ate his meal in silence ; but Bridget stared as though she had seen a ghost.

“ That is right, Cousin Ella,” said Mrs. Fitzhammer, as they returned to the sitting-room : “ there is the true Ward grit in you yet. But you must not tire yourself too much, or you will not hold out. Here, lie down on this sofa.”

“ I do not wish to lie down, neither do I wish to be insulted further with your sympathy, Addie Fitzhammer,” was the curt reply. That personage was silent ; and Mrs. Grant looked toward her and smiled, as if to say, “ She will do well enough so long as she keeps her spunk up.”

This condition of things continued for several days : but the strain was too great ; and, when the re-action came, she sank lower than ever, took to her bed, and never left it but for the grave. True, she lingered for a few months ; for she was constitutionally what is called tenacious of life. Her frame did not readily yield to disease : but she was too broken in spirit to sustain herself as she could otherwise have done ; and the very day on which Helen left Lakeside, the unhappy woman breathed her last.



Let us not condemn her too severely ; for she was sinned against, as well as sinning : but let us rather turn our attention to the causes which produce results so much to be deplored. We may say that we can not reach to remove them. But are we certain of this ? Humanity has not yet learned the half of its powers ; and “ *can not* ” ought not to belong to the vocabulary of a progressive people.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### IN THE HOSPITAL. — WOMAN'S PROTECTORS.

“Our strong protectors they, if we from them will but protect ourselves: if not, then we may sink, thrust by *protecting* hands beyond the pale of hope.”



ELEN was in her fortieth year: still, the most of people would not have called her over thirty-five; and some insisted that she could not be more than thirty. But those who lay upon those cots of suffering cared not whether she was thirty or fifty. If they could but feel her soft hand upon their aching brows, or listen to her musical tones as she read to them from time to time, to while the tedious hours away, they were satisfied.

For three months she had been the nurse and valued assistant at Hospital B., in the vicinity of Washington; and, in that time, many a poor soldier had been made more comfortable through her care, and not a few owed their lives to her patient skill. The common soldier or the wounded officer blessed her very shadow as it passed; but, whilst those in charge could hardly afford to dispense with her services, they did not like her.

The fact was, she was not humble, not deferential enough. She met them too much like an equal; and was, at the same time, so faithful in her duties, that they



could find no cause of complaint. The physician in Helen's department was a gentleman of fine personal appearance, who seemed to think himself quite irresistible; and, fixing his eye upon her when she first came, seemed determined to make her the object of his especial regards.

But her ideas of the duties of a nurse and his seemed to differ somewhat; and she ignored him so thoroughly at this point of difference, that he could not even prefer his claims.

This, of course, annoyed him exceedingly. Herbert Granger was among the wounded; and Helen paid particular attention to his wants, devoting her spare moments to him, as far as possible. He had no idea that she was Charles Harlow's mother, and once expressed his wonder that she should be so kind, — should take such an interest in a "scapegrace" like him.

She smiled in reply, and said, "I knew your parents once, and wish to do all I can for their boy."

"When, where, Miss Harlow?" he asked eagerly.

"Not since you can recollect; at least, I have known but little of them since: so don't bother your head about it, but lie still and get well."

"Miss Harlow, I wish you would tell me all you know; for I am so hungry for home."

"Well, here is a letter: read that, while I go and make some gruel for that poor fellow in the next ward;" and, handing him a letter that had come that morning, she left him to its perusal.

When she returned, about an hour afterward, she found him weeping bitterly. She did not speak, but went and placed her hand upon his head, soothing him



as she would a weary child ; knowing, that, if it was any thing that he wished her to know, he would tell her of his own accord.

With a child's abandon of grief, he caught her hand to his lips, and kissed it, sobbing, " O Miss Harlow ! I have no mother now."

" Your mother dead ! " exclaimed Helen, manifesting more feeling than she was aware.

But Herbert was too much absorbed in his own grief to notice this. " Yes, Miss Harlow : she has gone. Oh ! what a wretch I was to enlist and leave her, when her health was so poor ! "

Helen was so shocked, that she did not speak again for some minutes ; and, when she did, it was to inquire about the particulars.

" Here is the letter," said he : " read it for yourself. I can not tell you about it."

Herbert was occupying a single room, parted off from the others ; but the curtain that served as a door was put back, leaving the entire room open to the passer-by. The doctor had started on his rounds, and, stopping just out of range from those within, had seen and heard all.

As Helen came out of the door, he confronted her with " Miss Harlow, if you manifest your preference so openly, I fear that the rest of the boys will be jealous ; " accompanying the words with a look which showed that he would like to become her *protector*.

She looked up to see what he wished, as he commenced speaking ; but, gathering the import of his words, passed on without further notice of his insult. That afternoon, as she was passing by where some fresh arrivals were lying, the word " Mother ! " arrested her



steps ; and the next moment she was locked in the arms of her son.

After the first greetings were over, Helen drew back, and looked questioningly upon his pale face.

"Only a scratch, mother, and I shall soon be up again : but, if those rascally surgeons had had their way, I should have been a cripple for life."

Just here, orders came to remove "private" Granger to another part of the building, and to put Major Harlow in his place. Helen turned quickly : she thought, at first, that she would oppose the arrangement ; but, remembering the doctor's look and tone, she simply said, "Please don't let Mr. Granger know who is to occupy his place."

Charles looked up. "It is Herbert," she replied ; and there was no further remark.

"Do I hear aright, *Miss Harlow* ?" asked the doctor, the next time he met her.

"What have you heard ?" she asked.

"That you are Major Harlow's mother."

"I am, sir."

"As young looking and as handsome as you are ! And here you have been making us believe that you were a young lady, all this time," said he, with the most winning smile at his command.

"I told you my name was Helen Harlow, sir : the prefix has been of your own choosing," she replied ; and then, seeing the address of a letter lying on a table before him, she added, "I should like to have a talk with you, doctor, when I am a little more at leisure."

"With pleasure, madam ; with the utmost pleasure. Come here at any time after three o'clock."



“Coming around at last,” he soliloquized ; while Helen to herself, “He little thinks what I have to say to him !”

It was about four in the afternoon before Helen knocked at the doctor's door. She came for directions and medicines, but took the time to ask the questions she wished.

The gentleman hastened to offer her a seat ; but she negatived the movement with her hand, and said, “I saw a letter upon your table, this morning, addressed to the Hon. Charles Edson, Ross Cove, Me. Are you a relative of his, sir ?”

“I have the honor to be his son,” was the somewhat pompous answer.

“Are you a son of his last marriage ?” she continued.

“I am the oldest son of that marriage, madam. Are you acquainted with my father ?” he asked, manifesting some surprise.

“Your mother and mine were sisters.”

“It is not possible !” he exclaimed, in astonishment.

“I have suspected it,” she replied. “It is not only possible, but true, Dr. Edson.”

“And you have known this all along ? Why, my fair cousin, I never dreamed of such a thing. But why have I been kept in ignorance of this ? I did not know that my mother ever had a sister who married a Harlow.”

Without noticing his last question, Helen continued, “You accused me, this morning, of partiality for Mr. Granger : know, then, that that young man stands in the same relation to me as you would to my mother if she were living, — the son of the man who betrayed me, and my son's half-brother.”



The doctor staggered as though under a heavy blow.

“ You do not mean — you are not my sister ! ”

“ Your cousin and your half-sister, sir. ”

“ Well, I do recollect now, that my father once, in a fit of repentance, just after my mother's death, told me something of this ; but he did not inform me that the girl he talked so pathetically of betraying was my mother's sister. ”

Helen noticed his tone, and added, “ And you promised him, that, if he would bring me home, you would receive me as a sister. ”

“ Well, yes, — I believe there was something of the sort said, ” he answered ; “ for, having no sister, the idea rather pleased us. ”

“ Well, Dr. Edson, you need have no fears of my claiming relationship : that is not my purpose at all. I thought, however, that I would *protect myself* from your impertinence by informing you of the fact ; for I hardly believe you bad enough to persecute a sister, knowing her to be such. ”

The manner in which Helen said this irritated the doctor so much that he retorted, “ Had you always been as careful to protect yourself, *Miss Harlow*, it would have been well ; but ‘ Like mother, like daughter ’ seems to have been true in this case. ”

Helen was about leaving the room ; but at this she turned and gave the gentleman a look that he was not to forget soon.

“ What about ‘ Like father, like son, ’ Dr. Edson ? My mother never pressed the lips of any man but your father : did he live as purely ? I have lived as my mother did, true to the last : are you as much like your father ? ”



There was a withering scorn in her tones, which made the bold man quail, in spite of his efforts to maintain his dignity. "My father is a man who is respected wherever he is known," he said.

"And so is *my father*, sir; but that does not prove that he always behaved in a respectable manner, or that his son has improved upon his example," she replied. "And now, sir, I forbid you, from this time forth, to speak to me, or to recognize me in any manner whatever, further than your profession demands;" and, before he could reply, she was gone.

"My God!" he muttered, as he gazed after her retreating form: "a woman like that is worth possessing; and the man who cast her off is a fool."

Helen went directly from the doctor's office to Charles.

"Mother," said he, "what is it that annoys you?"

"Nothing very much, my son: why do you ask?"

"Because I wish to know, of course."

"Nothing; only that Dr. Edson is from Ross Cove, Maine, and my half-brother."

"Mother!" and Charles Harlow raised himself up on his elbow.

"There, lie down now, and behave yourself, you naughty boy," said she, as she playfully boxed his ears.

"But how did you learn it? You did not claim him as a relative, mother?"

"Does not my boy know me better than that? I asserted the fact, but repudiated the relation."

"Repudiated it?"

"Yes: I forbade him to recognize me in any manner whatever, other than our relative positions here professionally render necessary."



“Why did you do that, mother?”

“Because the man would think that he was stooping, was conferring an *honor*, by acknowledging me as his sister: and you know, my son, that your mother never accepts such recognition from any one, man or woman; never has, and never will.”

“I should like to meet the man, or woman either, who could confer a greater honor than they received by recognizing my mother,” said Charles proudly.

“Dis way, massa, dis way,” said the obsequious darkey, as he conducted a gentleman toward the door of the room occupied by Helen and Charles; “right in dar; and the lady is wid him:” and they turned to meet Mr. Gordon.

“Helen, you here! God bless you! Major Harlow, allow me to congratulate you; not on your wound, but your promotion,” said he, extending a hand to both.

“Promotion over the grave of a worthier man,” replied Charles, with tears in his eyes.

“Who?” asked Helen.

“Major Wright, a brother of Prof. Wright of Springville; and a nobler fellow never lived.”

“Have you seen Herbert Granger, Mr. Gordon?” said Helen.

“No: I have just arrived. Who is he? a son of Mr. Granger’s of Albright?”

“He is. Please don’t let him know who Charles is, as it might fret him in his present state. The poor fellow is mourning over the death of his mother; and that is as much as he ought to bear at once.”

“Have you seen him, Helen?” asked Mr. Gordon.

“Yes: but he does not know who I am; and I don’t want him to learn, so long as I can prevent it.”



Just here Dr. Edson came in, ostensibly to see how "Major Harlow" was getting along; but really to test Helen's temper a little further. In a moment, Helen was simply the nurse.

"Dr. Edson, Mr. Gordon," said Charles with cool politeness. The doctor made a slight examination of Charles's wound, looked at his tongue, felt his pulse, and then gave Helen some simple directions, taking particular pains to call her "*Miss Harlow.*" Charles noticed this, and so did Mr. Gordon; and were aware, from the doctor's manner, that it was done on purpose.

Charles's eye flashed; but, restraining himself, he ignored the intended insult by saying, "Mother, dear, I am thirsty: will you hand me some water?"

But Mr. Gordon followed him from the room; and, as soon as they were beyond the hearing of the others, said, "Doctor, I have been acquainted with that lady, Major Harlow's mother, for years; and any rudeness to her will be looked upon as done to myself."

The doctor stared. "I was not aware that it was rude to call a woman by her right name," he said.

"It was not the matter, sir, but the manner of your address that was offensive," replied Mr. Gordon.

"And pray, sir, who are you, that you defend the lady so valiantly?" asked the doctor coolly.

"One who knows her father, and yours too, young man."

"And her son's father also, I presume," said Edson, white with rage; for to be told that Helen was his sister twice in one day, and that after his course toward her, was more than he knew how to bear.

"I do, sir; and, if he was here, he would knock you down for your impudence," replied Mr. Gordon.



"Perhaps you had better do it yourself, sir."

"No, Dr. Edson ; my profession as a minister does not permit of such an act : but I will confess that the old Adam is so strong within me, at times, that I can hardly restrain myself ;" and, turning abruptly away, he went back to the room occupied by Charles and his mother.

"Do you know who that man is, Helen ?" he asked.

"I do, Mr. Gordon ; but have refused to recognize him, or to be recognized by him."

Mr. Gordon looked at her keenly. "As strong to assert yourself as ever, I see," he said at length. "I felt like knocking the fellow down, and would have done so but for the name of it ; but I guess you will take care of him without my help."

Charles laughed aloud. "A pretty confession that, for a minister, Mr. Gordon !"

"I know it, major ; but, since this war commenced, I sometimes feel as if I was losing my identity, — as if I was not half as much a minister as before."

"I think we are all learning lessons," remarked Helen.

"I wish, Mr. Gordon," said Charles presently, "that you would go and see Herbert Granger."

"I will : where is he ?" Helen led the way.

"Mr. Granger, here is a gentleman who knows your family, — the Rev. Mr. Gordon, from Glencove, New Hampshire ;" and, saying this, she left them together.

Mr. Gordon grasped the young man's hand. "Happy to meet you, Mr. Granger : have never had the pleasure of your acquaintance, but knew your parents well."



Herbert barely responded, and, looking after Helen, asked, "Do you know, Mr. Gordon, if Major Harlow is the Charles Harlow from Lakeside who attended school at Springville some years since?"

Mr. Gordon was taken by surprise, and could not well avoid answering in the affirmative.

"And the lady who has just left us is his mother?" continued Granger.

"She is," was the reply.

Granger turned away with a groan. Presently he looked up. "You may think I am wicked, Mr. Gordon. I suppose I am; but my mother is dead, and I wish that I was too."

"Fie, fie, young man! You are sick now, and depressed. You will soon get over this, and enjoy life yet."

"My mother sick and dying," he continued, without noticing Mr. Gordon's remarks, "and I to be receiving the attention of her enemy, — the woman who made her life bitter!"

"If you think that Miss Harlow ever did any thing to make your mother unhappy, you are mistaken," said the minister in his kindest tones; for he really pitied the young man.

Herbert was silent, and Mr. Gordon continued: "Your father forsook Miss Harlow, and married your mother, — a very great wrong, but one that his children are not to blame for. After his marriage, your father never saw Miss Harlow till her son was sixteen years of age, — the time when she was taking him to Springville to school."

"Do you know this to be true?" asked Herbert at length.



“If I did not, I would not say so, Mr. Granger.”

“It may be true, but my mother did not think so, sir ; and then to have *her son* coming here and taking my room as Major Harlow, while my mother's son must give place because he is only a poor private ! But what am I saying, sir ? I have not my mother's pride, or I should not be telling this to you ;” and, turning abruptly away, he could not be induced to say any thing further.

Mr. Gordon was grieved, and so was Helen : but it was the Ward pride, the Ward hatred, that had been aroused ; and all efforts at a friendly feeling on the part of either Helen or Charles were rejected with scorn.

He did, it is true, accept Helen's attentions till he was able to wait upon himself ; but he accepted them as from a servant, never once acknowledging his obligation by either word or look.

He did not seem to care whether he lived or died ; but, when he found that he was really recovering, he was only anxious to get away from the place.

“Let him go,” said Charles : “it is his nature, and he must act it out.” But Helen sighed, and wished that it were otherwise.

Dr. Edson, finding that Helen would not be friendly with him, continued his petty annoyances ; till, one day, he found himself quietly removed, and another taking his place.

He never knew exactly how this came about ; but his curses, if not loud, were deep. But Dr. Edson was not an exception : those who were like him were found in every department of army-life ; and those women



who went to care for the suffering soldier found but too often, if they would not accept the kind of *protection* that those in power desired to bestow, that their places would be given to those who would.

Helen's experience with the doctor was but one of the many lessons that she learned of human nature and its workings, during the time that she acted as nurse; and, when she returned home, she was often heard to say, "Give woman the power to protect herself, and teach her that she must do it: but mock her no longer with the idea that she has a protector in man; at least, not while she is thought to be his legitimate prey, if he is strong enough, psychologically, to overcome her reason or control her judgment."

There is one more incident that I will relate before I leave this part of my story. There was a Capt. Gilbert in the hospital for a while, who, not being sufficiently recovered from an ugly wound in the left shoulder for active service, was still able to be about. He was a middle-aged man of active temperament, and, wearied of idleness, would often aid Helen in her duties. One day, Helen heard Sam the darkey saying to this captain, —

"Mity fine woman, dat, mas'r cap'n, if she do hab a boy an' no man."

"What do you mean, Sam?" asked the captain.

"I means, mas'r cap'n, dat Mas'r Harlow, who went away just afore you cum, he her boy."

"What, Miss Harlow?"

"He call her mudder, ennyhow."

"Thank you, Sam: here's some money for you."

"Gosh!" said Sam, as he caught the shining coin: "you's good, mas'r, ennyhow."



After this, Capt. Gilbert was particularly attentive ; not rude, but continually manifesting that kind of interest which is so annoying to a sensitive woman. Helen bore it a while without seeming to notice it ; But one day, when he had been more persistent than usual, she said to him, —

“ Captain, when you were a boy, did you ever go skating ? ”

He seemed somewhat surprised at the address of such a question in midsummer, but replied, “ Often, often, my dear Miss Harlow : it was a favorite sport of mine.”

“ Did you ever see a great rude boy purposely trip up a little girl because she was not used to the ice, and he could do so just as well as not ? ”

“ I do not recollect now that I ever did : but I am certain, if I had witnessed such a thing, that I should have thrashed the villain within an inch of his life ; or, if not, it would have been because I wasn't able.”

Helen smiled. “ But suppose, Mr. Gilbert, that all the other boys upon the ice had taken it into their heads that they had a perfect right to do the same thing, because the first one had.”

The captain hesitated. “ I do not see the purport of your questions, Miss Harlow ; but I do not think that such a company of boys could be found,” he said at length.

“ Still, if the girl chances to be seventeen instead of seven, and the big boy twenty-three or four, and he succeeds in tripping her on the slippery steeps of youthful passion, the others will not even permit her to rise if they can prevent it, but look upon her from henceforth as their lawful prey.”



Helen looked the gallant captain full in the eye as she said this: and he evidently understood her meaning, for he colored to the roots of his hair; and from that time forth he never said, “*My dear Miss Harlow.*”





## CHAPTER XX.

## SCOUTING AND ITS RESULTS.

"Sound the loud bugle; the war-dogs, still howling,  
Are eagerly snuffing their prey:  
The red cloud of war is o'er us still gleaming,  
While peace stands afar, all weary with waiting  
The hour that shall give us again to her sway."



"MAJOR HARLOW." Charles bowed, touched his cap, and waited the pleasure of his superior officer.

"I have sent for you to consult with you in reference to a difficult, I may say dangerous, undertaking."

"I shall be happy, colonel, to serve you by any or every means in my power."

"You have heard of Wilson's gang, major."

"Do you mean the rebel scout, Col. Hazen?"

"Rebel devil, I should call him," said the colonel excitedly: "for, if ever the prince of darkness was incarnate, I believe he is in Sam Wilson."

"I have heard of his exploits, and I think I saw him once," replied Harlow.

"Ah, you have!" exclaimed Hazen, his small black eyes brightening till they shone like two coals: "well, you are just the man I want, then. I want Sam Wil-



son brought to me a prisoner; and the man who does this shall be well rewarded."

"I am at your service, colonel, but want no reward further than the consciousness of having done my duty," replied Charles.

"Tut, tut, man; none of your transcendental ideas in practical matters. The consciousness of having done one's duty is well enough; but we all like the substantial reward, no matter what we may say."

Charles knew his colonel too well to argue the point with him; so he simply asked, "What do you propose, colonel?"

"Dem me, didn't I tell you that I wanted Sam Wilson?"

"Yes; but what course do you propose, to accomplish that?"

"I propose nothing, Major Harlow: dem me if I am fool enough to set a man to work who doesn't know enough to do his own planning."

"Allow me to make a proposition, then, colonel."

"Just what I want, sir. It takes you a dem'd long while to see the point, though. But I'm waiting: speak on."

"The old saying is, that it takes a rogue to catch a rogue; and I propose, Col. Hazen, that a scout shall catch a scout."

The colonel settled back in his chair, and laughed heartily. "Go on," said he: "you are all right."

"I propose, then, with your permission, to take a picked company of men, and go on a scouting tour; simply this, and nothing more, the ostensible purpose" —



“And the real one Sam Wilson.”

“Yes, colonel; and not even the men themselves to know this, only as I choose to inform such as I think it best to.”

“You are all right, major: dem me, I knew you would be. Go and pick your men, and don't let the grass grow under your feet, young man.”

Charles smiled. He knew that a kind heart beat under the rough exterior which Col. Hazen so delighted to present; and, turning away, he was about to proceed on his mission, when he was called back with, —

“Don't be in a hurry, major: stop and take a glass of wine with an old chap like myself.”

“Thank you, colonel, for the honor intended; but I fear that it would not make my head any the clearer for my intended enterprise.”

“You don't mean to tell me, Major Harlow, that you refuse to drink with me?” thundered the colonel.

“Sorry to offend you, sir; but I would refuse to drink with the president, should he ask me to do such a thing.”

“The president is no better than I am, young man.”

“Of course, not; nor any better than I am, Col. Hazen.”

“Go along with you, before my sword resents your impudence,” was the response; ending in “Ha, ha! good spunk; dem me, if he hasn't.”

Major Harlow lost no time in selecting his men for the projected enterprise, — ten active fellows, fleet of foot and strong of limb. These were all he asked; for he depended more upon strategy than numbers for the accomplishment of his object. This done, the next step



was to fix upon a place of rendezvous, and arrange a general plan of action : for particular movements, each was to depend upon the exigencies of the moment.

For their headquarters they selected a farmhouse some ten miles from Vicksburg,—the residence of Judge Benifield. The judge was at heart a Union man, but was so situated that he dare not make his real sentiments known. Like many others in the same situation, his house became, in turn, the resort of those belonging to both armies,—he always taking the attitude of submission when our soldiers visited him ; but many a Union soldier owed his life to the judge or his pretty daughter, and many a Union officer demanded at the point of the sword that which was gladly given under cover of this seeming compulsion. In fact, he always assumed friendship to the rebels, and hatred to the “cursed Yankees.”

Sybil Benifield was seventeen years old ; of medium height, and not handsome, but what is called interesting. There was something about her which charmed those who made her acquaintance ; though, if they had tried, they could not have told wherein the charm lay.

Major Harlow had met Miss Benifield once ; but we will not say that this had any thing to do with his choice of headquarters : of course, it had not.

But, one pleasant day in June, he came to the door with his ten picked men ; and, summoning the judge, he said, “ Mr. Benifield, I wish to make your house a center for myself and men for a while. We may be here all at a time, or separately ; but, if you play them false in any manner, you will answer to Gen. Grant for the offense.”



"You know my sentiments, sir," replied the judge ; "but this is no longer a free country, and one must submit when he can't help himself." He was particularly bitter in his manner of saying this ; but there was a look in his eye which showed that it was intended for other ears.

"I don't care a pin for your sentiments, but shall watch your acts," replied Charles, in the same arbitrary tone that he had used at first.

"Well, major."

"Harlow is my name, sir."

"My house is at your service, and my family at your mercy, Major Harlow ; and I hope you will be gentleman enough to respect the common rights of humanity."

"Tut, tut, you old rebel ! do you measure us by yourselves ? But my men here would like some dinner ; and then we will be off for to-day."

"That you shall have, major ; and, if you make no heavier demands upon us, I shall be glad." Just here, Charles saw the figure of a man stealing quietly out of the back door. He paid no attention to this for he knew that the judge was so situated, that it would not be safe for him to have one of the rebels taken at his house, and determined, therefore, to avoid it if possible. The judge had seen the movement also, and showed his relief at the absence of said individual by a change of countenance and manner which gave a truer index to his real feelings.

"Walk into the parlor, major," said he with a smile of relief. "You will find my wife and daughter there ; and I will go and give orders for the comfort of your



men ;” and, throwing open the door, he announced, “Major Harlow, ladies.”

Mrs. Benifield arose with quiet dignity, and gave him her hand in welcome ; while Miss Benifield only bowed. In a few moments, however, they were all three pleasantly engaged in conversation ; and the time passed so rapidly, that Charles was quite surprised when dinner was announced.

“You have excellent servants, Mrs. Benifield,” said he, “or you have the faculty of making time seem very short. It seems hardly ten minutes since the orders for dinner were given.” The lady smiled, but her daughter pointed to a letter lying behind an ottoman.

Charles turned and picked it up, and was about to give it into her hands, when she said, “It is not mine : some one has dropped it there.” The tone in which this was said was so significant, that he transferred it to his own pocket. As soon as he could find an opportunity, he examined the missive, and found that it was a line from Wilson to one of his men, and contained information of importance. Charles had been so careful in opening it, that he had but little difficulty in closing it up again in such a manner that no one would think that it had been disturbed.

“This will be missed and looked for,” thought he ; and, going back to the parlor, he waited till he caught Sybil’s eye, and then dropped it in the same place that he had taken it from. She smiled, and, presently after, made an excuse to go to that part of the room ; and, in doing so, transferred the note to her pocket. “You had not been gone an hour, major,” she said to him afterward, “when that letter was inquired for.”



"Indeed : and what did you tell the gentleman ?"

"What could I tell him, but that I had picked it up after he went out, and kept it for him ?" she responded with a merry laugh.

"Which was true, Miss Benifield."

"Of course it was, major : I did not pick it up before he went out, and I did not give it to any one else."

"But you have not told me who the gentleman was."

"Certainly not. I am a rebel, you know : but I have just dropped a photograph ; and if you pick it up, and refuse to give it to me, I can't help it." She here made a point to get the little card which had fallen to the floor ; but he was too quick for her.

"Give it to me, sir." She uttered this in a quick, distressed tone, which the twinkle in her black eye contradicted.

"Couldn't do it, miss," he responded, placing it in his breast-pocket.

There was a moment's silence ; and then she said, "Major Harlow, this life of double dealing is so distasteful to me, that, at times, I almost hate myself ; but what can I do ? It is the only way in which I can help the cause I love."

"Do as your conscience dictates, Miss Benifield, and don't be troubled about results. If deceit is not an element of one's nature, it will be practiced no longer than safety demands. We never voluntarily remain in a condition that is hateful to us."

"I am glad to hear you say so, major ; for I have feared that you would come to believe that I was a natural hypocrite," she replied.



“ Really, Miss Benifield, you make me very happy : I had not dared to hope that you cared for my opinion.” She blushed ; and, thus encouraged, he took her hand in his. “ Sybil, — may I call you so ? — will you be my wife ? ”

“ When victory perches beside the eagle,” said she, lifting her eye proudly to his.

But we have got a little ahead of our story ; though, when one recollects how witching a thing love is, I do not know as it is to be wondered at. So we shall not ask the reader’s pardon, but simply go back and take up the thread we have dropped.

The man who had left the judge’s house so quietly, as Harlow and his men came upon the scene of action, was one of Wilson’s men. He started for Wilson’s camp, or, rather, cave, — for it was nothing less. He started for this as soon as he was out of sight of the house : but he had not gone far, before he missed the letter he had dropped ; and his anxiety about it caused him to return in search of the precious document. Upon coming near enough to watch the movements of Harlow’s men, he waited till he saw them leave, and then hastened thither to inquire if “ Miss Sybil ” had seen any thing of any papers or letters after he had left.

She gave him what he sought ; and, little dreaming that it had been opened, he eagerly seized it, and, with many thanks, hastened away. But he had been so delayed that he did not reach Wilson till some time after dark. In the mean time, the finding of this letter suggested to the mind of Harlow the idea of deceiving the enemy by a similar *accident*, but done on purpose.



He knew, that, as soon as the man missed his letter, he would return to search for it; so, hastily drawing up a fictitious plan of action for himself and men, he managed to drop it just where the man could not very well help finding it.

“Well, this is luck!” muttered the rebel scout to himself: my own paper safe, and the plans of those d—d Yankees in my hands in the bargain!”

Wilson and his men were in high glee. “We will trap them now, and that is certain,” said Capt. Sam, as he was familiarly called by his men. A part of the plan marked down in the letter he had dropped, Major Harlow carried out purposely; keeping his eye, the while, on Wilson’s movements, that he did not get the advantage of him.

In this manner he was gradually drawing the latter into a trap. But his plans were unexpectedly frustrated by an incident that he had not counted on. One of the men that he had selected was remarkably swift of foot and sure of aim, but somewhat impulsive, and a little careless, sometimes, about hearing straight. One day, when they were out foraging, Harlow had stopped with his men in an open plot of ground in a field that had once been cultivated, but was now grown over, mostly, with bushes and small trees. While there, he wandered a little away from the rest; but, ere many minutes, he returned with “Boys, take care of yourselves: Wilson’s men are right upon us; and I’m not ready for him just yet.” And, suiting the action to the word, he leaped the nearest fence, and disappeared in the woods.

Every man followed his example but the one above



referred to, — Pipkin by name, or Pip, as he was called for short. He did not start till every one else left ; but then, as if just waking up to the necessity of the case, he measured off the ground so fast that he outstripped many of the others. Upon reaching the woods, they all skulked ; but had had barely time to do this, when Wilson and his men, twenty-five in number, came into the little open space they had just vacated.

Harlow did not wish his men to discover themselves ; but Pipkin, finding a tree of sufficient size to protect his body, just in range with them, and a limb upon it just high enough to rest his gun, could not resist the temptation to try his skill. So, before the others knew what he was about, he had fired right in amongst them. This so frightened them, that they broke and ran. They could see no one ; but the boldness of the act, together with the fact that their leader was wounded, took away all of their courage.

Wilson was hit in the thigh, and had barely got under cover of the bushes, when he fell ; and his men had to carry him off. That night, Capt. Wilson was carefully tended by Mrs. Benifield in an upper room of the Benifield mansion, while Miss Sybil entertained the Union major in the parlor.

“Hush !” said Mrs. Benifield, as the pain he endured extracted a groan from Capt. Sam. “Major Harlow is below ; and, if he should learn that you are here, I don’t know what the consequences would be to us.”

“D—n the major ! I should like to put a ball through him,” was the irate reply ; but Mrs. Benifield looked so distressed, that he restrained himself after that.



The judge and his daughter knew which side they were on : Mrs. Benifield had but little preference in either direction. She only wished to be let alone ; but she feared both parties, and did all that she could to conciliate them. Her boys were not old enough to fight, and she was glad of that.

Sybil and her father kept their own counsel ; but the mother believed that their sympathies were with the South. " Mrs. Benifield," said Wilson at length, " I wish you would go down and entertain that Yankee, and let Miss Sybil come up here."

" It will not do, captain," she replied : " he would miss her, and suspect something."

" D—n him !" he again muttered between his shut teeth ; and then, recollecting that it was not gentlemanly to swear in the presence of ladies, " I beg your pardon," he said ; " but it is enough to drive a man mad to have to lie here, and that man down there with Miss Sybil."

" It will make no difference, captain. Sybil is not a girl whose mind is easily changed : she thinks for herself."

This did not comfort the captain much, but he was obliged to be content. Could he have heard Sybil saying, " When victory perches beside the eagle," and have seen the light in Major Harlow's eye as she said it, he would have felt much worse than he did.

But Harlow was not ignorant of Wilson's whereabouts, nor of the fact, that, for fear of compromising the safety of the family, he was to be removed to his own retreat as soon as his condition would permit of it ; and he had laid his plans to take the rebel captain at



that time. He succeeded in this to his heart's content ; and Col. Hazen was more than satisfied with the manner in which he had executed the undertaking.

"I think, though, major, that you are determined to secure your own reward," remarked the colonel facetiously, as Charles asked leave to go to Judge Benifield's about two weeks afterward.

"I will not pretend to misunderstand you, colonel," he replied, "and will answer you in her own words : 'When victory perches beside the eagle.'"

"Is it so ? God bless you, Major Harlow ! Miss Sybil is worthy of any man's love," replied the colonel, grasping his hand ; "but, dem me, you've worked fast, though."

"But you haven't told me if I can go," said Harlow with a smile.

"Go ! dear me, of course you can. Do you suppose I want you running away, you rascal ? I have been young myself, and know that a pretty girl will draw a chap farther than a four horse-team could. Go along with you, boy."

Charles hurried away, with his heart full of glad anticipations ; but he was doomed to a trial he little dreamed of. His leave of absence extended from Saturday noon till Monday noon. It was about a week after the surrender of Vicksburg ; and, during the second evening, the conversation turned upon the gallant conduct of one of the highest officers, who had risen by the force of merit, from a barefoot boy with neither home nor friends, to the high position he then occupied.

"I knew him when he was a boy of seven," said



the judge ; “ and a sprightlier little fellow you seldom see. He was living with his widowed mother then. His father was an English gentleman’s son, and was disinherited for marrying beneath him. Being unused to labor, he sickened and died from the hardships he was obliged to endure. His mother lived on a few years, and then went to join her husband, leaving little George to the world’s charity.

“ This was in old Connecticut : and the overseers of the poor bound him out to a hard master ; and, poor fellow, he had a hard time of it. But he has lived through it all, and is now a great man. One can overcome any obstacle but actual disgrace.”

“ Which do you mean, judge, — disgrace of birth, or one’s own conduct ? ” asked Charles, a quick pang striking through his heart.

“ Both, young man ; both. The customs of society may seem arbitrary ; but still, we must bend to them. A man whose mother has the fiftieth part of colored blood in his veins, it matters not who his father may be, can never rise.”

“ But suppose he gets his colored blood from his father, instead of his mother ? ” asked Charles.

“ That is hardly a supposable case, major ; but, if so, the mother is eternally disgraced, and the son follows her condition.”

“ And in the case of illegitimacy, where both parents were pure blood, your decision would be the same ? ”

“ It would : the child must follow the estate of the mother.”

Sybil looked disturbed, though she hardly knew



why. And the thoughts that were running through the mind of her lover were any thing but pleasant. Presently Charles looked up. "Judge Benifield," said he, "allow me to suppose a case, — one which, of course, can never be ; but we will imagine it, for the sake of the question I wish to ask."

"Any thing you please, major," replied the judge pleasantly.

"You believe in psychology, sir, — in the power of one mind over another?"

"I believe that there is such a thing, though I can not say that I understand it."

"Well, suppose that I do. I am engaged to your daughter ; and she has confidence in me as a man of honor, or she would never have pledged herself to me. But suppose that she is mistaken, — that I am a villain ; and, finding that she is subject to this psychological influence, I use it upon her to her ruin : must she and hers be for ever disgraced?"

The judge's feelings were evidently touched. "I own," said he, "that it seems hard ; but we couldn't set aside the decision of society."

"And I" —

"I would shoot you as quick as I would a dog," was the prompt reply.

Here the conversation was interrupted by the tunes of the piano ; and the evening passed off without further reference to the subject. Charles Harlow passed a sleepless night. His soul rose up in rebellion against the injustice to which woman is thus subjected. "Talk of chattel slavery!" he murmured: "where can we find a more cruel slavery than this? But where is the



voice bold enough to be lifted in the defense? where the hand strong enough to break the chain?"

In the morning he was haggard from the effects of his mental struggle. Sybil noticed it, and asked him if he was sick.

"No, dearest; but I have something to say to you after breakfast."

The morning meal was eaten in silence almost; for there seemed to be a restraint upon all. When it was over, they repaired to the parlor, while Cæsar was told to bring out the major's horse.

"Judge Benifield," said Charles, after they were seated, "I have something to say to you, — something that I can not with honor leave unsaid, after our conversation last evening; but I hope that you will do me the justice to believe that I have not intentionally deceived you."

He paused for a moment, for the pallor of Sybil's face was unmanning him. The judge looked his astonishment; while Mrs. Benifield glanced from one face to the other in a sort of bewildered way.

"No," continued the young man: "I had no intention of deceiving you, for I have been so accustomed to seeing my mother treated with respect, that I never once thought of it; but I am an illegitimate child."

There was evidently a conflict in the judge's mind; but pride triumphed. "I am sorry that I did not know of this sooner," he said at length; "for it would have saved us all some painful feelings: but, of course, you will resign all pretensions to my daughter's hand."

Charles turned and looked at Sybil. She left her seat and walked directly to his side. "Major Harlow is my



promised husband, father, and I shall not give him up." Charles had risen to his feet; and, as she said this, he threw his arm around her.

"Go to your room, girl!" thundered the judge, angered at having his authority disputed. "Disgrace has never yet been linked with the name of Benifield, and I shall see to it that no daughter of mine mars the record."

"I will obey you now, father; but when victory perches beside the eagle, I shall be free to follow the dictates of my own heart." She turned to Charles for a parting kiss: he held her in his arms for a moment, and then she hurried from the room; for the gathering cloud upon her father's brow warned her of its necessity.

"Horse ready, sah!" said Cæsar, thrusting his woolly head into the door.

"Good-morning to you all," said Charles; and, walking directly out of the house, he sprang into the saddle, and was soon galloping toward Vicksburg.

About a week afterward, there was word brought to him one evening, that a lady at the hotel wished to see him. He wondered who it could be, but repaired immediately thither. "Sybil! Miss Benifield!" he exclaimed, as the figure upon the sofa arose and threw back her vail. "What does it mean that I find you here?"

"It means, Major Harlow, that the spirit of the Benifields is aroused, and one will not yield to the other."

"What! How?" he asked, still at a loss to divine her meaning.

"Nothing: only my father has confined me to my



room since you left, determined to make me promise to give you up ; but to-day he had to leave upon business, and I escaped, and have come to you."

"My own brave girl ! will you give me the right to protect you from this time forth ?" said he, taking her hand in his.

"Nonsense, major ! it is hardly necessary for me to break my word in one direction for the sake of keeping it in another. I promised my father that I would not marry any one till I was at least eighteen years of age."

"But what will you do, my darling ?"

"Give me a pass for my passage North, and let me go to your mother. I would not ask even this, major, if I had the money to go without it."

"My mother is in one of the hospitals at Washington, as nurse, Sybil."

"Well, Charles, let me go there and share her duties. I have often felt that I would like to do something for the brave boys who are laying their all upon their country's altar."

He looked at her to see if she was really in earnest. "I mean it," said she, smiling back upon him.

"I see that you do," he replied ; "but I hardly think it best. Let me make a proposition."

"Speak on, Sir Wisdom, and I will listen."

"Not if you banter me that way, miss."

"But I really wish you to, sir."

"Your wishes are commands, fair lady," he replied in the same tone. "My mother is wearing herself out, and I wish her to go home ; but she will not go to stay there alone. I propose, therefore, that you go to her, taking a letter from me, — that is, if I can not get leave



to go with you. I will send a letter, introducing you as my promised wife, and ask her to go home and take you with her."

"You wish this for your mother's sake?" she asked.

"For my mother's sake, and yours too."

"I did not ask the question, major, because I was jealous of your love to your mother; but simply that I might decide as to whether I had better accept your proposition or not. For myself, I had rather stay where I can be doing something; but if you really feel that your mother ought to go home, and there is no other way to induce her to do so, I will do as you suggest."

He looked at her in surprise. "My own Sybil, I am proud of your thoughtful consideration. I love my mother; she is worthy of a son's love and devotion: but I feared, after what has passed, that you might feel a little prejudice toward her."

"I did at first, Charles, and am free to confess it: but I have had plenty of time to think while alone by myself; and I have come to the conclusion that the woman who can maintain her integrity after having been thus wronged, — and this with all the pressure that is brought to bear against her, — I have come to the conclusion that such a woman is much more worthy of respect than one who has never been tried."

"If the world would all take that position," said he, with tears in his eyes, "it would save many a poor creature from despair."

"Lady below wishes to see Major Harlow," said the waiter at this moment, throwing open the door.

"Who can it be?" exclaimed Charles, starting to his feet.



"Some old sweetheart, I presume," said Sybil with a laugh.

"What shall I tell her, sir?" asked the waiter.

"Show her up here," replied Harlow; and then, turning to Sybil, "You will have a chance to see for yourself what kind of a sweetheart it is."

"Poor fellow, how it is plagued now!" she replied with another laugh.

Here the approach of footsteps prevented further conversation, and the eyes of both were fixed upon the door. A middle-aged lady entered; and Charles, with one bound, clasped her in his arms. "Mother, dear mother! is it you?" The first greeting over, he turned with, "My mother, Miss Benifield: my promised wife, mother."

Helen received Sybil with a warmth that won her heart entirely. "And now," said Charles, seating himself between them, "mother dear, I wish to know how it happens that you came just when we need you so much."

"I came, my son, because I was hungry for the sight of you, and because I could not hear from you."

"Could not hear from me!"

"No: I have not had a letter from you these six weeks."

"Strange, when I have written to you as often as every ten days, and sometimes more frequently. Why did you not tell me that you did not receive my letters, mother?"

"You have received mine, then?"

"All of them; or, at least, as many as usual."

"I did not mention it, because I knew, that, if you did



not receive mine, it would be of no use ; and if you did, that yours were probably delayed somewhere, and would come at last : so I did not wish to trouble you. But when the papers announced the fall of Vicksburg, and still no word, I thought it was time to be looking up my truant."

"Never truant from you, mother. But I can not imagine what has become of my letters," said Charles thoughtfully.

"But for what were you wanting mother so much ?"

He now explained Sybil's position, avoiding the cause of the judge's opposition, of course ; and expressed his desire that his mother should go home, and take Sybil with her.

"Have you told her all, my son ?" asked Helen.

"All, mother," he replied.

"And are you willing to go with me, my child ?" she asked, turning to Sybil.

"If you will take me, mother," she answered.

Helen clasped the fair girl's hand in silence ; for her heart was too full for speech.

And so it was decided that Helen Harlow should go back to New Hampshire, taking Sybil Benifield with her as "one of the principal results of the major's scouting expedition," laughed Col. Hazen, when he heard of the arrangement.

They tarried several days, however, visiting the principal places of interest ; and, when they left, Charles went with them as far as Cincinnati.

Judge Benifield came to Vicksburg during the time, and had one stormy interview with his daughter. But she refused to return home with him, and the feeling



was too strong against him for him to attempt to take her forcibly.

“Dem fool! dem me if he isn’t!” muttered Col. Hazen.

“Col. Hazen never swears,” said Charles demurely.

“No, major, dem’d if I do; my mother taught me better,” was the rather comical reply, — a reply that was received with roars of laughter.

“Look here, Major Harlow: you haven’t got leave to go to Cincinnati yet; and dem me if you do, if you keep on in this way. Shouldn’t go anyhow, if it wasn’t for the respect I have for that mother of yours.”

“Smitten, ha! I think some one of us had better inform Mrs. Hazen, so that she can come and take care of you,” said one of his brother-officers sportively.

“Would to God that you could bring her here!” he exclaimed, dashing the tears from his weather-beaten cheek. “But no; I am selfish to wish it: she is now an angel in heaven.”





## CHAPTER XXI.

## HOME AGAIN. — A SUPPLIANT.

“Where we have scorned, we yet shall bow the knee. The crown of thorns shall to a crown of glory change, when long enough it has been bathed in blood drawn from the living fountain of long-suffering souls; when man, proud man, shall learn that through the woman heart must flow the stream which maketh glad the city of our God, ere yet the serpent’s fangs have ceased to sting.”—  
L. W.



ELEN reached her home in safety, and was welcomed upon all sides with a warmth which made her feel that she had indeed triumphed. As for Sybil, notwithstanding the respect which she had conceived for her prospective mother, she was more than surprised, she was astonished, at the evidences of regard everywhere manifest. Rich and poor, old and young, hailed her coming alike; and Lakeside seemed almost the scene of a jubilee.

And Sybil too, “our captain’s promised wife,” as they called her. “But he is major now,” said black Susan, as jealous for the family honor as was ever any Southern slave.

“Well, captain or major, it makes no difference, Susan. I presume he will be colonel, if not general, when he returns; but he is ours: we have known him from a boy, and know that he deserves all the honor he gets.”

Susan well remembered when they did not look upon



it as an honor that he was born among them ; but she wisely forbore any comments. Sybil, too, was everywhere received with favor ; and she had not been at Lakeside six months, when she was not only surprised, but delighted, to see her father walk into Helen's little shop.

"Don't be alarmed, child," said he : "your poor old father couldn't do without you very well, and has concluded to stop playing the fool, by giving his consent to your marrying worth instead of name."

"Oh, I am so glad, father!" said Sybil, between tears and smiles. But how are mother and the boys?"

"They are well, you willful puss ; and I think I shall bring them up here, for I like the looks of the country."

"O father ! I wish you would."

"Well, you needn't go into ecstasies over it ; but they are in Boston now."

"In Boston ! Have you really left the South ?"

"Yes : it was getting too hot for me. The rebs have found out, somehow, what a game we had been playing them, Syb, — you and I (you know mother never had any thing to do with it) ; well, they have found it out, and have sworn vengeance.

"It was only three weeks ago, that, hadn't it been for the young major, we should all have been murdered in cold blood, and the house burned over our heads. But he found it out in some way, and, with a dozen good fellows, came galloping up just in time to save us.

"Says I to myself, when I learned all about it, 'Tom Benifield, you are an old fool, if you are judge. Little Syb has got out of their reach, and you had better be doing the same. So here I am ; and your mother and the boys will be here soon.'"



“When, father? Who is coming with them?”

“I don’t think it will hardly do to tell you every thing at once,” replied the old man in a teasing tone.

“Sybil, my darling, Charles is coming home on a furlough: he — How do you do, Judge Benifield? I beg your pardon for not seeing you; but I was so intent on the contents of this letter.”

“No excuses, Miss Harlow,” stammering over the “*Miss*” a little, in spite of himself: “no excuses; and I ask your pardon for my unreasonable opposition to your son’s suit. It is time that we learned better than to make children suffer for a father’s rascality.”

Sybil colored. “I do not think, father, that mother has been informed of the cause of your opposition.”

“I can easily infer it,” replied Helen with a smile; “and am glad, Judge Benifield, that you have learned the lesson which many others need to learn, and must, before woman can have justice done her. As for myself, I am happy to meet you as a friend; and, if you bring your family here, I beg of you to accept the hospitality of my poor home, till you can provide a better.”

“Thank you from my heart, madam, — or — miss; but I think you have a part of my family now,” replied he, trying to hide his embarrassment at his awkwardness by a laugh.

“I claim Sybil as mine,” she answered, giving her a fond look; “but I like the Quaker style of address, judge; and, if you please, you may call me Helen.”

“Thank you, Helen: I will try to remember.”

Charles came the next day, bringing with him Mrs. Benifield and the boys; and, for the time, there was no



happier company in all the land than the one covered by Helen Harlow's roof.

How events are crowded together in some periods of life ! Like the ripening harvests after a season of toil, they hurry us with the gathering, till our granaries are full and running over, and we hardly know what to do with the excess.

Charles had been at home but two or three days, before the people of Lakeside had their curiosity aroused by seeing Mr. Granger of Albright at Helen's door. Helen herself was at a loss to know the meaning of this visit. Still, she received him with a kind cordiality which was natural to her, and introduced him to her friends.

Charles was absent with the judge ; and that personage, upon his return, opened his eyes a little wider than usual, to see a stranger step up and grasp the major's hand, with a " God bless you, my son ! "

Charles returned the salutation, and, turning to the judge, said, " Judge Benifield, my father, Mr. Granger of Albright. "

" You look surprised, Mr. Benifield ; and well you may : but, twenty-five years ago, I made as big a fool of myself as any one man ever did. There has not been a month since that time but I have regretted it : and, could I make peace with the woman I then so deeply wronged, it would be the crowning of my life ; but it is a greater boon than I dare ask. "

" You will pardon me, sir, if I speak plainly ? " asked the judge.

" Most assuredly, sir : you can not place my conduct before me in a worse light than I see it myself. "



“Why do you come here, then?”

“Why do I come here?” repeated Granger in a tone of surprise.

“Yes,” continued the judge: “it seems to me like an insult, under the circumstances. You have a wife and family, I believe?”

“I understand you now, sir. I have a family; but I have never been here before, and should not have come now, had Mrs. Granger lived.”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Granger: that puts the thing in quite a different light. But why not do her justice by marrying her now?”

“That is the point, judge. She has done herself justice, has forced the world to recognize her worth; and she does not need justice from me. The honor would be all on the other side.”

Helen at this point left the room, and Charles followed her. Sybil would have gone too; but she did not feel quite free to do so.

“You do not mean to say, Mr. Granger, that she would not marry you?” exclaimed the judge.

“I mean to say, that, if she would, it would not be because she demanded recognition, or even accepted it through marriage; for she would honor me by so doing, more than I could possibly honor her.”

“Strange, strange!” murmured the judge, more to himself than to Granger; then, looking up, “Are you afraid to ask her, sir?”

“I am ashamed to ask her, sir.”

“My daughter, here, has taken a notion to your boy, Mr. Granger; and I guess if you will make both of the children your allies, you need not fear the result.”



Sybil, at this, left the room ; and, going directly to Helen, she put both arms around her neck, saying, "Mother, I have a request to make."

"What is it, my child?"

"But will you grant it?" persisted Sybil.

"How am I to tell, dear, until I know what it is?"

"I want another father!" Helen looked up to meet the eye of Granger: he was standing in the door. When Sybil left the room, her father caught the flash of her eye, and divined her intention; and so motioned Granger to follow.

"I wonder if it will have any weight if I add my request to hers," he said.

"I rather suspect that you sent her," replied Helen, trying to appear calm.

"I did not, Helen; but I would send a dozen like her, if I thought it would do any good." His voice trembled with suppressed emotion; and she felt that she must not trifle with him.

"Do you wish it, children?" she said, turning to Charles and Sybil.

"If it will add to your happiness, we do," was the response from both.

Still she hesitated; but his pleading eyes were upon her, and she finally said, —

"I have always loved you, Edward; but the time has been when I should have given the most emphatic 'No' to a question like this. The longer I live, however, the more I am convinced that you have been wronged, as well as myself."

"How?" he asked, wondering if her thoughts had taken the same direction, as his sometimes had.



“Society,” she replied, “in crushing the woman while it accepts the man, in a measure tempted you to do as you did.”

“True, true, — every word of it. But it could not crush you, Helen ; while I have suffered, God only knows how much !”

“It could not crush me, because I would not be crushed,” she replied.

“True ; and I wish every wronged woman would take the same stand. But you have not answered my question, Helen.”

Again there was a hesitancy, as though she could hardly bring herself to say the words. “I suppose it must be as the children wish,” she answered at length.

“At last !” he murmured, taking her hand in his, — the first time he had done so since that night of the so long ago, — the night on which the story opens. Some thought of that time seemed to stir him ; for he said, “O Helen ! I am humbled when I think of the truthfulness of your life as compared with the falseness of mine.”

“Society forced me to be true to myself, or sink ; while it held you up, sustained you in the wrong,” she replied.

“No more of this laying my guilt upon the public,” he said, playfully covering her lips with his hand. If society tempted me, I sinned, and I have suffered. ‘The *soul* that sinneth’ is the declaration. Do you think, if I should be *tempted* to put my hand upon a red-hot stove at your suggestion, that it would be burnt any the less on that account ?”

“Well, never mind the philosophy now. If it is to be as the children say, I want it when the children say too ;



and I should like to have things settled before I go South again," said Charles.

"Nothing would suit me better, my boy. What say you, Helen?"

"You say, 'the children,' and don't even ask my opinion. I did not suppose that man and wife were one, and that one the husband, till they were married, at least," said Sybil, with a pretty pout upon her lips.

"You forget that it was included in your request to mother when you first came in," replied Charles. "But I should like nothing better than to have the children made one at the same time. What say you, my Sybil?"

Sybil blushed, but replied gayly, "The conditions are not fulfilled yet, sir."

"Oh! yes, they are: victory has perched beside the eagle several times since then."

"But you well know that that was not what I intended; and, if I begin by allowing you to resort to subterfuge, there is no knowing what liberties you will take after a while. No, sir: you must wait the appointed time."

Charles looked disappointed; but the judge, who had come into the room in time to hear the last part of the conversation, laughed heartily. "That's right, puss," said he: "make him toe the mark while you can; for you will have to yield enough in the end."

"I wish Charles to be recognized under his right name before they are married," said Granger.

"Oh, how humble when they woo us!

Oh, how proud when they succeed!"

repeated Helen.



Granger looked up inquiringly.

“You talk of my *honoring* you,” she replied: “still, my identity must disappear. I must take your name, go to your home; and my child must bear his father’s name, or he is *disgraced*.”

“I know it, Helen,” said he. “I know that it is unjust. What have I done, these twenty-five years, to add to the honor of the name of Granger? Nothing, nothing at all. If I have maintained it intact, I have done well. I stand no higher to-day than when I first knew you; while you have risen triumphant over difficulties that have hitherto been considered insurmountable. And now, even your name must go, if you honor me with your hand. I feel, almost, as if I was committing sacrilege to ask it.”

“Perhaps you had better relinquish your claim,” said she mischievously.

“I am too selfish for that, Helen. It is said, that, when a man marries, socially speaking, he brings his wife to his level: if above her, she rises; if beneath her, she sinks. And I think you will have to be content to sink to my level; for I can see no way in which I can rise to yours.”

“But we will thank God, Edward, that social levels and real levels are two things,” was her earnest reply.

“Well, well,” said the judge: “you Northerners have very utopian ideas, I must say. I expect you will be setting up some woman for president yet.”

“And, if elected, if she could not do better in that capacity than some of the men who have *held* — I will not say *filled* — that office, I should advise her not to try it the second time,” retorted Helen.



Charles and Granger laughed heartily at this, and the judge made no further comment.

Mr. Gordon's services, as a matter of course, were brought into requisition ; and there was a quiet wedding in the parlor over the little shop, on the following week.

"Three funerals, and then a wedding," said the reverend gentleman playfully. "Are we to have two more weddings to follow this, so as to make matters even?" glancing at Charles and Sybil.

"I can see indications of but one more," answered Granger. "But you forget, sir, that one wedding is equal to two funerals."

"How so?"

"A funeral is for one person, and a wedding for two."

"True, Mr. Granger ; but the *two* are made *one*."

" 'I see, I see,' said the blind man," he replied.

Charles saw his mother settled in her new home, and then returned to his post, bearing letters to his superior officers, which, in his next promotion, secured his commission as Col. Charles H. Granger, in the place of Charles E. Harlow.

Judge Benifield and his family remained at Lakeside, in Helen's old home ; and Sybil, no longer afraid of being separated from her affianced, staid with them.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon visited Helen a few weeks after she went to Albright ; and the gentleman said, "I think, Mrs. Granger, it is about time that we settled those questions, solved those problems, about which we have talked in the past."

"I am ready to give you the result of my observations and meditations at any time, sir ; but I shall not promise



to make you see as I do. Each one must reach his own decision through his own experiences; and each decision thrown out upon the great mass of mind produces its own effect."

"Suppose, then, that we devote this evening to that purpose. Mrs. Gordon, will you and Mr. Granger join us?"

"I prefer to be a listener."

"And I too," responded Granger.





## CHAPTER XXII.

## PROBLEMS. — CONCLUSION.

“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” — BIBLE.

“Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.” — BIBLE.



VENING came; and, seated around the pleasant room in familiar conversation, the time was fast passing, when Mrs. Gordon said, “It seems to me that you have forgotten the subject of the hour: at least, you are not discussing problems.”

Mr. Gordon looked as if he hardly knew where to commence; and Helen said, “I am waiting for the question.”

“Question!” said Granger.

“Echo!” laughed Gordon.

Granger looked as if he did not quite understand the joke; and Mrs. Gordon enlightened him by saying, “Husband is laughing because you repeated Helen’s last word so promptly.”

“Oh! is that all? Well, if I never echo any thing but what comes from her lips, I shall never be ashamed of my echo.”

“Never mind the echo: let us have the question,” said Helen.



“ I think, Mrs. Granger, that some of the questions of the past have come from you,” Mr. Gordon replied.

“ Do you wish me to answer my own questions and yours too, sir ? ”

“ That would be hardly fair, I acknowledge ; but do you recollect what my first question was ? ”

“ I think it was something about my being a Christian ; was it not ? ”

“ Something to that effect, I believe.”

“ And you grieved over my blindness in not seeing the need of a Saviour ? ”

“ I did, Mrs. Granger.”

“ But confessed that you could not understand the theology you taught ? ”

“ How ? ”

“ Did you not confess that you must say with Paul, ‘ Great is the mystery of godliness ’ ? ”

“ I believe I did.”

“ And still you teach that only through this — through God manifest in the flesh — is there salvaion for man.”

“ That is the teaching of the Bible, as I understand it.”

“ Well, Mr. Gordon, I believe this to be true ; but it is no longer a mystery to me.”

“ You have experienced religion, then ? ”

Helen laughed, and asked, “ How do you arrive at such a conclusion ? ”

“ Because only those who have experienced a change of heart can understand what it means.”

“ Must I conclude then, that, after all these years of preaching, you have not experienced that change, Mr. Gordon ? ”



He saw the point, and colored, but made no reply ; while she continued : “ Do not suppose, Mr. Gordon, that I must necessarily see this subject, solve this mystery, from your stand-point. In the first place, I must tell you that it is from the hells of earth that we need salvation. If we save ourselves, as a race, from these hells, by destroying them, removing their causes, we have laid the ax at the root of the tree, and it will not take long for the branches to perish.”

“ Must save ourselves, did you say, Helen ? ”

“ Yes ; and through God manifest in the flesh.”

“ That is, we must lay hold on Jesus ? ”

“ Only so far as we can avail ourselves of the wisdom of God as manifested in him.”

“ But in him dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

“ It might have *dwelt* in him, Mr. Gordon ; but the wisdom of God — *enough* of that wisdom to save us from the earthly hells to which we are subject — certainly was not all *manifested* through him.”

“ What do you mean, Mrs. Granger ? ”

“ I mean just what I say, Mr. Gordon. The difference between us is this : you recognize the man Jesus as the Saviour ; I, on the other hand, recognize the power, justice, love, and wisdom of God, whether manifested through Jesus or through any other channel. I recognize God manifest in the flesh, in or through all humanity, as the Saviour of humanity. In other words, this Christ must be born in us, be manifest through us, each and every one, before we can be saved as a race, not from future, but present hells.”

“ But what of future hells, Helen ? ”



“We must be saved from them through God manifest in the spirit.”

“I must confess that I can not understand you,” said Mr. Gordon, after a moment’s thought.

“Do you ever expect to see God, Mr. Gordon?”

“Certainly, I do.”

“How?”

“As manifested through Jesus Christ.”

“A personal, individual God: where, then, is the infinite?”

“Where? Everywhere.”

“Then you will see in Jesus only what is manifested through Jesus; in Paul, as much of God as is manifested through Paul; and so on: thus you can never really and truly see God till you have seen all that there is, has been, or ever shall be.”

“I suppose you are right, if you take it in that sense.”

“Acknowledge, then, that we can see God only as manifest in his works, and can be saved by God only as he manifests himself through us.”

“How manifest through us, Mrs. Granger?”

“Man possesses, in a finite degree, all the powers, elements, that we recognize in the Infinite. Is not this true, sir?”

“I believe that it is, Helen.”

“And just as far as these elements are manifest here in the flesh, just so far is God manifest in the flesh; and when there is enough of these elements, these powers, enough of power, justice, love, and wisdom, manifested through the human family as a whole, and in harmonious proportions, — power, justice, and wisdom,



each and all ruled by love, — then, and not till then, will God be fully manifest in the flesh, to the redemption of humanity.”

“ But how is this to be done, Mrs. Granger ? ”

“ Through suffering ; through those experiences which bring self-assertion in accordance with the right ; through those teachings which tend to bring into action the ‘ I am ’ within, causing the soul to say, ‘ I looked, and there was none to help : I wondered that there was none to uphold, and mine own arm ’ (or, in other words, God manifest through myself, — my flesh) ‘ brought salvation.’ ”

“ I don’t know but you are right. The recognition of what we have been taught to look upon as a specialty, as a universal principle, may be the true theory, after all,” was Mr. Gordon’s thoughtful remark.

“ Suppose, then,” said Helen, “ that we leave this point, and take up another ? ”

“ Well, what shall it be ? ” he replied.

“ Why is there so much difference made between man and woman, in the punishment accorded by society for the violation of the law of purity ? ”

“ I will own, Mrs. Granger, that I can not answer that question, and so will wait for you.”

“ There are two reasons, sir. First, we find that the ruling class always claim immunity for acts that would be condemned in the class ruled.”

“ Nonsense, Mrs. Granger : you do not pretend to say that man exerts a greater influence than woman ? ”

“ We were not talking of influence, but of power. The king’s mistress may exert a mighty influence over him so long as she pleases him ; and all who desire the king’s



favor will flatter her : but let her displease him, and her influence is gone, while those who desire his favor will be more bitter toward her than even the king himself. Man, in our present state of society, so far as the law-making and the money-making power is concerned, — in both of these, at least, he is king, and woman the subject ; consequently, man can do with impunity what woman is crushed for doing.”

“ And what is the other reason ? You said there were two.”

“ Womanly purity is of more importance to the race. Society is injured more through her downfall than his.”

“ I know that the mother has more influence over the child in its earlier years than man has ; and, as early impressions are the strongest, last the longest, of course it must be of importance to the world that she makes the right impression.”

“ The real cause lies farther back, goes deeper than the simple influence brought to bear upon the minds of the young. Have you ever thought why it is that woman is so much more susceptible than man ? has so sensitive an organization ? — why it is that people say, ‘ As nervous as a woman ’ ? ”

“ I have supposed it was because she was weaker.”

“ But why ? There is a cause for every thing, — a reason why.”

“ I can not tell : I have never thought upon it.”

“ Did you ever have your likeness taken ? ”

“ Of course, I have. Did not I give you one of mine and wife’s the last time you were at Glencove ? ”

“ You did. I simply asked the question for the sake of an illustration. Do you know why the artist is so



careful to keep the light from the prepared plate till it reaches a certain point of development?"

"I do not know exactly why, but because it will spoil the effect in some way."

"That plate is exceedingly sensitive to the action of light, — as sensitive as a woman's nerves. Every ray of light that reaches it makes its impression upon it. If you want your likeness taken, you dress accordingly; and you are very careful that nothing comes between your person and the lens of the camera.

"What, suppose you, Mr. Gordon, would be the effect if a serpent should be so placed as to come between your face and the lens, or glass, which reflects the light, carrying it through to the sensitized plate?"

"Why, I should have the picture of a serpent across my face, of course."

"Is there no process by means of which this could be prevented?" she asked.

"I do not know; but I hardly think that there is, Mrs. Granger."

"I think I see what application you are going to make of that, Helen," said Mrs. Gordon.

"Simply this," replied Helen: "woman's fine nervous organization is the lens of the camera; and the unborn babe is the sensitized plate prepared in the dark room of Nature's laboratory, to receive through this lens — the mother's nervous organization — the light, the influences that are reflected from the outer world. If, then, she becomes deranged, or is surrounded by degrading influences, the child inherits this as a part of itself; even as the serpent, in the illustration given becomes a part of the picture."

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Granger had been silent till now, but watching and listening the while, as though an angel were speaking. At the conclusion of her illustration, he drew a long breath, and said, —

“Who but you, Helen, would ever have thought of such a thing?”

“How true to Nature, though!” added Mrs. Gordon.

“And in perfect keeping with poor Jane’s story,” continued Helen: “and it was what she said that first set me to reasoning upon this question, in a way that could give me an understanding of woman’s true work.”

“What do you claim that work to be?” asked Mr. Gordon.

“The redemption of the race; the bruising of the serpent’s head through the laws of maternity.”

“The guardian angel of the fireside. I am glad, Mrs. Granger, that you have come to so reasonable a conclusion. I began to fear that you were affected with this ‘Woman’s Rights’ mania.”

“Mr. Gordon, do you think that it was right for the Egyptians to demand bricks of the Israelites, and at the same time withhold the straw?”

Granger laughed outright, and Mr. Gordon looked confused. “I don’t see the bearing of that question,” he said.

“When woman has the *power* to protect the household, when she has the right to the *law-making, law-enforcing power*, when she stands before the law her own protector, — then, and not till then, can she become the guardian angel of the household; then, and not till then, can she say to the serpents of lust and sensual-



ity, 'Stand back! come not between me and my work;' then, and not till then, can she so control the love of power in man, as to keep herself from becoming his victim. But, till that time comes, she must refuse utterly to become mother, or she must make bricks without straw; must transmit lust and sensuality; must be subject to the serpent influences that come up from those earthly hells into which man continues to rush, and to drag her with him when he can."

Mr. Gordon did not respond further, but sat in thoughtful silence; while his wife and Granger laughingly declared that Helen had come off victor.

This was the first of many conversations held upon this subject: for Mr. Gordon was not the man to yield a point readily, but, when once convinced, was free to acknowledge it; and to-day he is a strong advocate of suffrage for woman.

. . . . .

Our story is done, or so nearly so, that we have but to say, that, when victory perched beside the eagle, Sybil redeemed her pledge, and, with Charles's parents and her own, returned to the sunny South. There the three families are now living, and happy, with the exception of but one cloud: Herbert Granger's fate is unknown. His father and brother mourn for him, and, of course, the others sympathize in their sorrow.







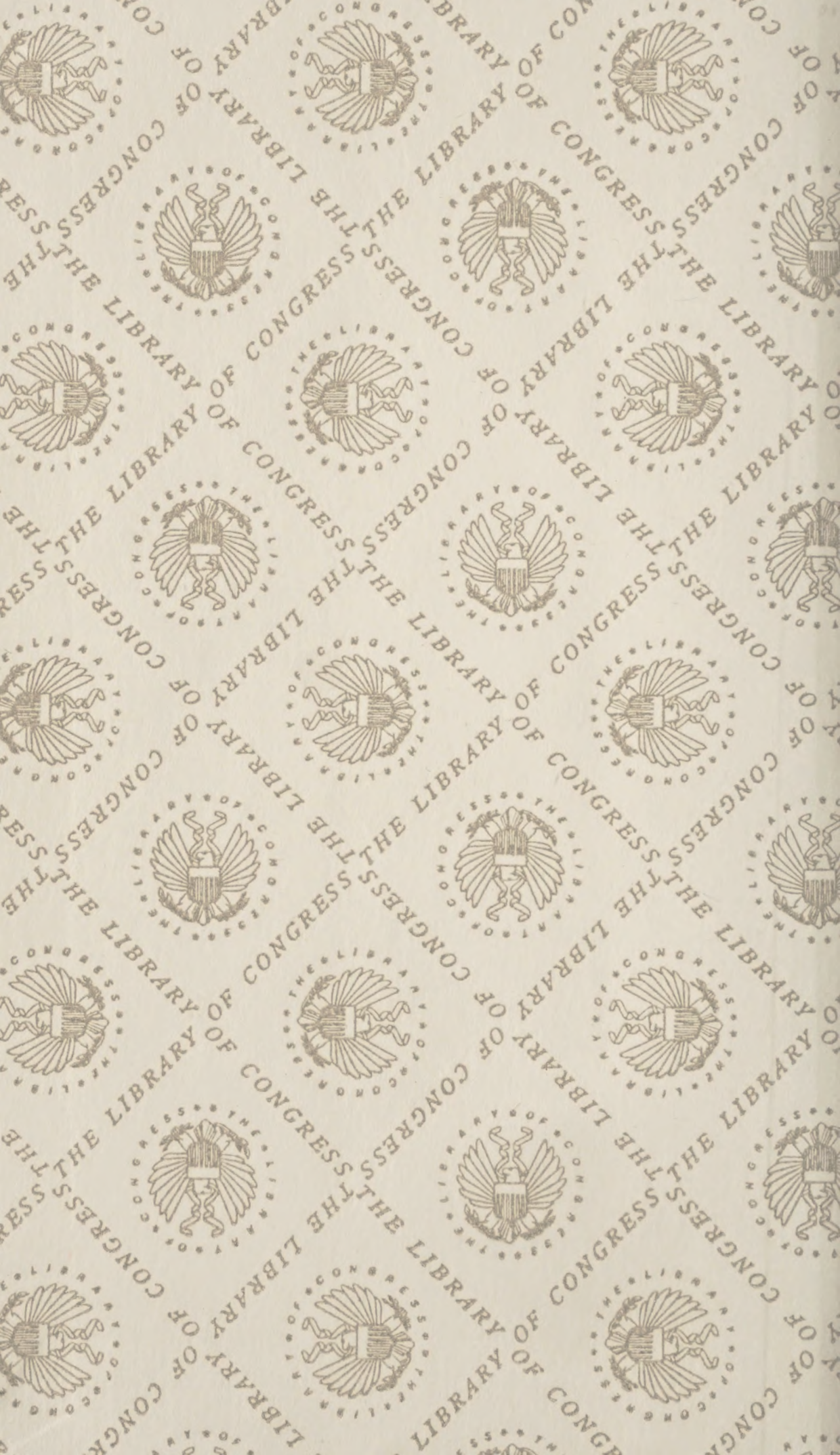
















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